




**ARABIC, ISLĀM,
AND THE ALLĀH LEXICON**

**HOW LANGUAGE SHAPES
OUR CONCEPTION OF GOD**

EDITED BY JOHN A. MORROW



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We dedicate this book to those who introduced us to the wondrous Arabic
language and the Allāh Lexicon

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Transliteration

Arabic Letter	Transliteration		Short Vowels
ا	'	ا	a
ب	b	ب	u
ت	t	ت	i
ث	th		Long Vowels
ج	j	ي & ا	ā
ح	ḥ	و	ū
خ	kh	ي	ī
د	d		Diphthongs
ذ	dh	و	aw
ر	r	ي	ay
ز	z	ي	iyy
س	s	و	uww
ش	sh		<i>Shaddah</i> =
ص	ṣ		doubled letters
ض	ḍ	ب	bb
ط	ṭ		Etc.
ظ	ẓ		Dialectal Vowels
ع	‘	ا	e
غ	gh	ا	o
ف	f		Dialectal Diphtongs
ق	q	ي	ei
ك	k		
ل	l		
م	m		
ن	n		
ه	h		
و	w		
ي	y		
ة	t / h		
ه	h		

The method of transliteration is based mainly on the one employed by Ghulam Sarwar, with some minor modifications regarding the representation of diphthongs and the *shaddah*. We have also chosen to ignore the initial *hamzah*. The practice of placing diacritical marks on English words of Arabic origin to ensure their proper pronunciation is taken from Ghulam Sarwar and Ian Netton, among other scholars of Arabic and Islām. While it is customary to say *subhānahu wa ta‘ālā* after the name Allāh, *‘alayhi al-salām* after the name of the Prophet, and *raḍiyya Allāhu ‘anhu* after the names of the Companions, we have chosen to drop them, to maintain the flow of the English. While these phrases are not included, they are intended, and readers are free to use them.

Foreword

This collection of essays on *Arabic, Islām, and the Allāh Lexicon* is a valuable addition to the literature on the distinctive history and tradition behind the everyday invocations of Allāh by Arabic speakers, and the perils of not understanding those usages in the modern sociopolitical world. Discussions of the origins of Allāh-based phrases, their frequency of use, and their translatability into other languages shed light on their continued importance as a vital feature in the Arabic language, and their relevance to our understanding of the interconnectedness of language and culture. Morrow, Castleton, and Vittor are to be commended for giving us this timely and informative book.

Dr. Beverly Olson Flanigan
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Preface

Allāh, in Arabic, constitutes the very foundation of Islām. According to the Muslim faith, there is no deity except Him. He is the Almighty, the Creator, and the Sustainer of the Universe who is similar to nothing and nothing is comparable to Him. So long as Muslims follow the teachings of Islām, their moral life will always be filled with godliness, piety, righteousness and truthfulness. In order to obtain satisfaction in life a person needs a moral source of aid or support to resort to in time of need. The Holy Qur'ān and the traditions of Muḥammad form two of the major foundations of faith in Islām. They are seen by Muslims as the fundamental authority which controls and judges the behavior of people in their daily interaction. The outward function of the Holy Qur'ān embraces all walks of life and covers all human affairs from very personal matters to complex international relations. The Allāh Lexicon can also be seen as another source of aid or support that Muslims resort to or use in time of need. The use of theocentric religious expressions among Muslims has become a common feature of social interaction in most forms of spoken dialogue, making up a large portion of the linguistic norms that can appeal simultaneously to both human intellect and emotion.

Sociolinguistic research on Arabic in general has indeed provided insights into various aspects of the language. However, there are still certain aspects that have hardly been investigated. One such aspect is the frequency and function of religiously-based expressions in the language. *Arabic, Islām, and the Allāh Lexicon* came to fill a major gap in our knowledge of the interactive relationship between language and religion. Divided in five chapters, the book examines the pervasive presence of Allāh in the Arabic language, the preponderance and purpose of these religiously-based expressions, and their Islāmic sources. It also examines issues of transferability related to the Allāh Lexicon and finishes with a philosophical study of the ninety-nine most beautiful names of Allāh. The major

aim of this work is to study the frequency and function of the Allāh Lexicon in Arabic from a sociolinguistic point of view. To a remarkable extent the authors achieve this goal.

The significance of this book is derived from the fact that it is the first of its kind, a collection of studies that attempts to demonstrate interplay between religious discourse and everyday talk. It attempts to show how Arabic has become saturated with a multitude of rich and varied idiomatic expressions invoking the name of Allāh. This book can be seen as a benchmark publication that will undoubtedly become one of those that find themselves on any number of reading lists for those who are interested in sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, intercultural communication, as well as education and social science. In addressing the underlying social, cultural, and ethical questions associated with Arabic as a language of Islām, this volume tackles a range of issues which have been neglected in sociolinguistic literature, in general, and Arabic sociolinguistics in particular. I think it is a timely and thought-provoking contribution to the current discussion on the position of Islām in the world. The authors have succeeded in highlighting not only the frequency and function of religiously-based expressions in the Arabic language, but also showing how such terminology is used by Muslim people for different sublime purposes in various parts of the world. I am particularly impressed with the dynamic manner in which they tackle this issue, not portraying Muslims as helpless community in the world, but as an active one having its own identity. In short, I highly recommend it.

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General Introduction

Classical Arabic was the chosen vehicle through which the Qur'ān, the holy book of Islām, was conveyed to the Prophet Muḥammad. Fifteen centuries later, it remains the language by which Muslims the world over, regardless of their native language, read the word of Allāh. Further, classical Arabic is the language that, at its zenith, communicated internationally on the highest levels of science and learning. In addition, throughout the last fifteen centuries since the birth of Islām, it has also been the wings on which essential expressions and key words have flown through speech and writing. Contained within Arabic, both classical and regional variants, is a feature which serves a plethora of speech, cultural, and religious functions. This vast body of spoken and written segments includes the words and phrases which comprises the Allāh Lexicon which appears with great frequency in the everyday speech of native Arabic speakers. Also found in literature and the media, these phrases reinforce religious commitment and acknowledge the place of Allāh in all venues of daily life. Indeed, the Qur'ān itself, as the manifest word of Allāh in Islām, has dictated the use of these phrases as a demonstration of humility and faith by all Muslims.

The purpose of this book is to study the frequency and function of the Allāh Lexicon in the Arabic language from a sociolinguistic standpoint. Divided in five chapters *Arabic, Islām, and the Allāh Lexicon* examines the pervasive presence of Allāh in the Arabic language, the preponderance and purpose of these religiously-based expressions, as well as their Islāmic sources. The book also examines issues of transferability related to the Allāh Lexicon and finishes with a philosophical study of the ninety-nine most beautiful names of Allāh.

The first chapter, "The Omnipresence of Allāh in the Arabic Language," examines the importance of key words in the study of culture, the theological foundation of the Allāh Lexicon and its main expressions, their frequency, the frequency of the word "God" in other languages, and some linguistic and socio-

cultural limitations affecting the spread of the Allāh Lexicon. It demonstrates that key words are the key to comprehending culture, that both the Qur’ān and the Prophet Muḥammad are the inspiration for the Allāh Lexicon, that Allāh expressions number in the thousands and are suited for any conceivable context, that the name *Allāh* or “God” has the highest functional yield in the Arabic language, that it is unique in this respect among all languages and cultures, even Muslim ones, and that Arabic is so replete with Allāh expressions that we can speak seriously of the omnipresence of Allāh in the Arabic language.

The second chapter, “Frequency and Function of Religiously-Based Expressions,” argues that an understanding of the embedded pragmatic devices in a language is indispensable in a thorough understanding of the broader culture and motives for the use of such terms. One distinctive feature of the Arabic language is the prevalence of phrases and words that include a reference to Allāh or God. Used throughout the Arabic-speaking world and even beyond into the far-reaching Muslim world, these phrases and words form a unique language constituent, known as the Allāh Lexicon. While many languages, including English, contain similar phrases, such as “Thank God,” or “God be with you,” the varied nature, scope, and use of the Allāh Lexicon far surpasses similar groupings in other languages.

In verses from the Qur’ān, believers were directed to regularly incorporate these religiously-based phrases in speech as a sign of their submission to the omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence of the Deity. As a result, Allāh Lexicon phrases are pervasive throughout their lives and daily activities. This chapter identifies an oft-used selection of words and phrases from the Allāh Lexicon, and determines the degree to which these items are used in everyday speech by native speakers of Arabic. It investigates the nature and distinctions of this Arabic language feature by examining its history and the function of the lexicon in speech and culture. Further, it considers where the lexicon most frequently is heard or seen, how it fluctuates across national and regional borders, and the manner in which it has left the realm of speech and gained access to publications and the press. In addition, through a multi-topic survey delivered to

native Arabic speakers in the Arab world, and others residing in the United States, we learned about the frequency and situational use of a selected segment of the lexicon.

The purpose of the second chapter is to establish the frequency of use of the word *Allāh* in Arabic, and to demonstrate that native Arabic speakers use features of the Allāh Lexicon daily, even moment by moment, as requisite elements of everyday speech. An initial exploration of the Allāh Lexicon raises many issues for future research, such as the base categories of discourse where use is most prolific, the other variations of Allāh's name which may open new classes of words and phrases, specialized areas of use, areas where pragmatic use has become ritualistic, and the manner in which the Allāh Lexicon becomes an element of structural grammar.

The third chapter deals with "The Origin of the Allāh Lexicon." It studies the specific religious sources of the Allāh Lexicon as found in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad. Through a survey of pre-Islāmic, Qur'ānic, and Prophetic expressions, it is shown that the Allāh Lexicon originated during the emergence of Islām, that it finds its major sources in the Holy Qur'ān, which played a seminal role in its spread, as well as the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad, which helped reinforce it and integrate it into the Arabic language and culture. The relationship between the Allāh Lexicon and identity is duly addressed, focusing on the fact that it can act as a religious marker, identifying the speaker as Jewish, Christian, Sunnī or Shī'ī. The importance of appropriately employing Allāh expressions, and the need to integrate them into Arabic as a Second Language instruction, is also examined. The various veils of meaning revealed and concealed by the Allāh Lexicon, an exoteric and esoteric code of communication, are exposed through a series of examples. Finally, the study exposes the challenges posed by secularization and modernization which may reduce the depth and breadth of this unique linguistic phenomenon.

The fourth chapter, "Transfer of Essential Phrases into Second Language Use," ascertains how the Allāh Lexicon, so necessary in Arabic speech, traveled from that language into English when native Arabic speakers switched to their

second language. A study of two groups of bilingual Arabic-English speakers, one living in the United States and the other overseas, indicated that despite the indispensable nature of the Allāh Lexicon in spoken and written Arabic, respondents revealed a range of emotions and reactions to inquiries about their use of the lexicon in English. This research arose out of a desire to learn how something that is considered absolutely crucial in one language and culture, by virtue of ties to deep-rooted religious views as well as to identity, can cease to have the same level of import when another language is being used. The question became, “Where does the *inshā’ Allāh* go?” Where does the ‘God-willing’ go?” Such research has taken on increased importance following the tragedy of 9/11, with the subsequent rise in anti-Islāmic sentiment, hate crimes against Muslims in the United States and other European nations, and a state of continuous bias against Muslims and their religious speech. Beyond this, the study examines issues of comfort which arise among native Arabic speakers when using these phrases, and investigated the possibility that Arabic-speaking Muslims may be foregoing the use of these phrases out of fear of persecution or intolerance.

The final chapter on “The Most Beautiful Names” explores the ninety-nine divine names and how they form the philosophical foundation of the Allāh Lexicon. While the previous chapters focused primarily on how Arabic-speakers invoke Allāh, this final chapter expounds upon the reasons underlying such omnipresent invocation, drawing from the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, and the teachings of Ṣūfīsm, revealing even more clearly why the Allāh Lexicon is a linguistic device unlike any other. According to Islām, the Essence of Allāh is utterly inaccessible. As such, the only means of reaching Allāh is through the knowledge of His attributes. Ninety-nine in number, the divine names represent the essence of Allāh, Islām, and the Qur’ān. The most beautiful names symbolize stepping-stones along the path of spiritual perfection, reaching its peak in the Perfect Person, the Complete Human Being, who has fully submitted to Allāh, becoming the microcosmic manifestation of the divine names.

While previous scholarship has focused on very specific aspects of the Allāh Lexicon: namely, politeness and impoliteness expressions, oaths, curses and

swearing, honorifics, second language acquisition, and gender issues, as well as a very narrow band of Allāh phrases, including God-wishes, root-echo responses, the use of *inshā' Allāh* and so forth, what differentiates *Arabic, Islām, and the Allāh Lexicon* from other studies in the field is the depth and breadth of its analysis, bringing together the main issues into a cohesive, cogent, and interrelated whole, which is duly contextualized as opposed to being examined in isolation. Our attitude throughout the project has been both objective and appreciative. In this, we differ from some Orientalists who investigate features of Arabic and Islām with a focus that tends to undermine or criticize. We have also avoided being Sunnī-centric, proportionally selecting material from Sunnī, Shī'ite and Ṣūfī sources, thus providing a comprehensive overview of the Allāh Lexicon. The approach of this study is an eclectic combination of sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, linguistic anthropology, philosophy, cognitive psychology, religious studies, sociology, and cultural studies.

Chapter 1

The Omnipresence of Allāh in the Arabic Language

By John A. Morrow

1. Introduction

The religion of Islām, in accord with the Holy Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* [Tradition] of Muḥammad (d. 632), the Messenger of Allāh, permits and even encourages mentioning the name of “God” to such an extent that the Arabic language has become saturated with a multitude of rich and varied idiomatic expressions invoking the name of Allāh. These idioms are collectively known as “the Allāh Lexicon,” a feature unique to Arabic and a reflection of the Allāh-centricity of the Arabic language, culture and civilization.¹

In the following chapter, we will examine the importance of key words in the study of culture, the theological foundation of the Allāh Lexicon and its main expressions, their frequency, the frequency of the word “God” in various languages, and some linguistic and socio-cultural limitations affecting the spread of the Allāh Lexicon. On the basis of this study, it will be seen that key words are the key to comprehending culture, that both the Qur’ān and the Prophet Muḥammad are the inspiration for the Allāh Lexicon, that Allāh expressions number in the thousands and are suited for any conceivable context, that the name *Allāh* or *God*, as a content word, has the highest functional yield in the Arabic language, that it is unique in this respect among all languages and cultures, even Muslim ones, and that Arabic is so replete with Allāh expressions that we can speak seriously of the omnipresence of Allāh in the Arabic language. On the basis of this study, it will be understood why Arabic is considered the language of Islām, the language of the Qur’ān, and the language of Allāh.²

2: Key Words: The Key to Culture

The value and importance of linking vocabulary and culture by means of key words has been widely recognized by scholars including, among others, Thorndike, Evans-Pritchard, Williams, Parkin, Moeran, Sapir and Wierzbicka. According to E.L Thorndike, “[t]he vocabulary, active and passive, of any group is truly an index of its nature and culture as are its tools, monuments, customs and myths” (qtd. in Eaton vi). According to Edward Sapir: “language [is] a symbolic guide to culture” (1949: 162) and “vocabulary is a very sensitive index of the culture of a people” (27). As Anna Wierzbicka explains, “some words can be studied as focal points around which entire cultural domains are organized” (16). Clearly, key words reflect core cultural values and are crucial in the interpretation of culture.³

Despite monolingual popular opinion and the academic arguments made by Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker, different words do indeed reflect different ways of thinking, something which is usually self-evident to people with an intimate knowledge of two [or more] different languages and cultures (Hunt and Benaji 1988). Whether language determines thought or thought determines language is matter of philosophical debate.⁴ What is clear is that people express themselves differently because they see the world differently.⁵ The existence of culture-specific conceptual categories makes any absolutist theory on the universality of human thought untenable. Since language is the reflection of thought, and thought is the source of science, culture and creation, “linguistics is of strategic importance for the methodology of social sciences” (Sapir 166).⁶ Since language is the key to understanding culture, “word frequency lists from different languages provide useful baselines for comparisons of many sorts” (Thorndike qtd. in Eaton vi). Having established the theoretical foundations of this study, let us now explore on-target support for the religious triggers which lead to the myriad variations of the Allāh Lexicon.

3. Theological Considerations

3.1 The Holy Qur'ān

The Allāh Lexicon originated during the emergence of Islām and first appears in the Holy Qur'ān. In Sūrat al-Kahf [The Cave], Allāh instructs Muslims to: “Nor say of anything, ‘I shall be sure to do so and so tomorrow’-- Without adding, ‘So please Allāh!’ And call thy Lord to mind when thou forgettest, and say, ‘I hope that my Lord will guide me ever closer [even] than this to the right road’” (18: 23-24).

In Sūrat al-Baqarah [The Heifer], Almighty Allāh says: “remember Me; I will remember you” (2:152). In Sūrat Banī Isrā’īl [The Children of Israel] and Sūrat Ṭā-Hā [Mystic Letters. T.H.], He says: “To Him belong the most beautiful names” (17:110; 20:8). In Sūrat al-A‘rāf [The Heights], He says “The most beautiful names belong to Allāh (7:180) and in Sūrat āl-‘Imrān [The Family of ‘Imrān], He calls upon the believers to: “Celebrate the praises of thy Lord again and again, and glorify Him in the evening and in the morning” (3:41). In Sūrat al-Aḥzāb [The Confederates], He commands the believers to “Celebrate the praises of Allāh, and do this often; and glorify Him morning and evening (33:41-42).” And yet again in Sūrat al-Ra’d [The Thunder]: “Those who believe, and whose hearts find satisfaction in the remembrance of Allāh: for without doubt in the remembrance of Allāh do hearts find satisfaction” (13:28).

3.2 The *Aḥādīth*⁷ / Prophetic Traditions

In a *ḥadīth qudsī* [sacred tradition] we read: “Oh you who believe! Remember Allāh abundantly” (Shirāzī).⁸ In another, Almighty Allāh repeats throughout “Remember Me...I will remember you.” In Tirmidhī (d. 892), the Messenger of Allāh says: “The best remembrance [of Allāh] is [saying] *lā ilāha illā Allāh* [There is no god but Allāh].” In Muslim (d. 875), it is related that he said: “Whenever people sit and remember Allāh, the angels surround them, mercy covers them and tranquility descends upon them and Allāh makes mention of them to His Company [of angels].” In Muslim (d. 875) and Bukhārī (d. 870), the Prophet states that: “He who remembers Allāh, and he who does not, are like the living and the dead.” In Aḥmad (d. 855), he says that the best deed is “[t]o leave

the world while your tongue is busy with the remembrance of Allāh.” In the same book, he says that the best people on the Day of Judgment will be “those who remember Allāh greatly.” In Bayhaqī (d. 1066), Allāh’s Messenger says: “For everything there is a polish, and the polish for hearts is the remembrance of Allāh.” In Aḥmad (d. 855), Abū Dāwūd (d. 817) and Tirmidhī (d. 892), the Prophet says: “Gabriel came to me and told me to order my Companions to raise their voices in *tabkīr*.”⁹ Not only did the Messenger of Allāh encourage the remembrance of Allāh, he prescribed many formulas, expressions and invocations for purposes of personal piety and for particular occasions, of which many examples are to be found in the collections of prophetic traditions.¹⁰

3.3 The ‘Ulamā’ / Scholars of Islām

In light of the teachings of the Holy Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*, it comes as no surprise that the scholars of traditional Islām¹¹ universally agree that *dhikr*, the remembrance of Allāh, is permissible at all times and places, quietly or out loud, individually or in group, with or without ritual ablutions, in various forms, including *tasbīḥ*, *taḥmīd*, *tabkīr*, and praising and praying for the Prophet.¹²

4. The Allāh Lexicon

The Allāh Lexicon is a language feature specific to the Arabic language.¹³ It is utilized extensively in the operation of everyday discourse in Arabic and to a much lesser degree among non-Arabic-speaking Muslims. It includes the following common expressions used by Muslims worldwide in a variety of different contexts:

Bismillāh: In the name of Allāh; *inshā’ Allāh*: If Allāh wills; *subḥāna Allāh*: Glory be to Allāh; *yā Allāh*: O Allāh; *māshā’ Allāh*: It is the will of Allāh; *jazāka Allāhu khayran*: Allāh will reward you well; *lā ilāha illā Allāh*: There is no god but Allāh; *bismillāh wa billāh*: I swear by Allāh; *alḥamdulillāh*: Praise be to Allāh; *yarḥamuka Allāh*: May Allāh have mercy on you; *astaghfirullāh*: I ask forgiveness from Allāh; *fī sabīlillāh*: In the path of Allāh; *tabārak Allāh*: Praise and might belongs to Allāh; *a’ūdhu billāh*: I seek refuge in Allāh; *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji’ūn*: From Allāh we come and to Him we return; *fī amānillāh*: Go with the protection of Allāh; *liḥubbillāh*: For the love of Allāh; *tawakkaltu ‘alā*

Allāh: I put my trust in Allāh; *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*: There is no might nor power but by [the help] of Allāh; *bāraka Allāhu fīk*: May Allāh bless you; *raḍiyya Allāhu ‘anhum*: May Allāh be pleased with them.

The Allāh Lexicon goes well beyond these examples and encompasses thousands of invocations, each of which is contextually bound: historically, geographically, ethnically, socio-emotionally, spiritually, and situationally. The most complete collection of Allāh expressions in the English language is to be found in *The Muslim Conception of God and Human Welfare* by Moshe Piamenta, consisting of over 200 pages of duly contextualized Allāh expressions drawn from both classical Arabic and everyday colloquial speech from throughout the Arabic world. Piamenta has divided the Allāh Lexicon into two main sections, “The Veneration of God” and “God and Human Welfare.” The first section covers expressions venerating God by affirming His existence, omnipotence, and unity; as well as thanking, glorifying, and blessing God. It also includes the invocations of God, religious symbols, Islām, the Prophet, the Qur’ān, the *hajj* and the Ka’bah, and God’s most beautiful names, namely the ninety-nine most common names Almighty Allāh uses to describe Himself in the Holy Qur’ān. The second section covers invocations relating to humankind’s survival and God’s blessings and support.

On the basis of his painstaking and elaborate research, and drawing from a voluminous corpus of formulae consisting of evocations expressed in a variety of Arabic dialects from a representative and diverse group of informants, Piamenta concludes:

Man’s veneration of God emerges from the belief in God’s existence, in God’s omnipresence and omnipotence; that the believer’s veneration of God in non-ritual prayers and invocations consists in bearing witness that there is no deity but God and that Muḥammad is the Prophet of God, in declaring his unity, in worshipping Him, in praising and thanking Him, in glorifying and blessing Him; that the believer is keen on his religion, on his Prophet, and on the Qur’ān; that he recites the Fātiḥah on various occasions; that the pilgrimage to Makkah and to the Ka’bah in particular are regarded by him with reverence; that formulae expressing man’s veneration of God may include names attributed to God known as God’s most beautiful names...not exhausting the full list of the Qur’ānic names, while comprising some that do not occur in the Qur’ān *ad litteram*. (2)

As Barbara Castleton points out in her dissertation, the Allāh Lexicon is present not only in speech throughout the Arabic-speaking world but in the tangible features of life as well: on flags, government stationary, songs, literature, emails (2000a). It abounds in Arabic and Islāmic music worldwide¹⁴ and forms an integral part of traditional Muslim medicine.¹⁵ It is also present in politics from the huge inscriptions on the outside of Moroccan towns proclaiming “Allāh, King and Country” to Saddam Ḥusayn’s insertion of *Allāhu Akbar* on the Iraqi flag in an attempt to attract some Islāmic sentiment, to military and political parties such as the *Ḥizbullāh*, “The Party of Allāh,” and to the election of George W. Bush.¹⁶

5. The Frequency of the Allāh Lexicon

Any observer who has lived in the Arab world even for short periods of time inevitably notices the preponderance of expressions invoking the name of Allāh explicitly or implicitly in everyday Arabic speech.¹⁷ The Allāh Lexicon occurs most frequently among Arabic-speaking Muslims, be they Mauritanian, Moroccan, Algerian, Libyan, Tunisian, Egyptian, Sudanese, Palestinian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Chadian, Syrian, Iraqi, Kuwaiti, Emirati, Qatari, Bahraini, Eritrean, Comoran, Djiboutian, Ethiopian, Omani, Somalian, Saudi Arabian or Yemeni. Classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic and the Eastern, Western and Gulf Arabic dialects are saturated with multifarious manifestations and variations of the Allāh Lexicon.¹⁸ As Castleton remarks, “[s]ome Arabic-speaking cultures may favor the use of one [expression] over another in a particular venue, but all cultures employ the Lexicon throughout normal discourse” (2000a). Without a doubt, the noun *Allāh* has the highest functional yield in the Arabic language.

While the Allāh Lexicon is found throughout the Muslim *ummah* [world community, lit. “motherland”], its frequency varies from country to country, from culture to culture and from language to language. The Allāh Lexicon appears among Persians, Turks, Indians, and other peoples who have been Muslim for over a millennium. Although Allāh expressions occur in Persian, Turkish and Urdu, they are far less prevalent than they are among the Arabs and are often supplanted by expressions falling partially outside the realm of the Arabic Allāh Lexicon, such as *Khudā Ḥāfiẓ* [God is the Preserver], and the secular Urdu

greeting *adāb*, meaning roughly “regards to you.” Arabic speakers use thousands upon thousands of Allāh expressions. Non-Arabic speakers rarely use more than one or two dozen.¹⁹

Allāh expressions occur with least frequency among Muslim converts/reverts from the West. The Allāh Lexicon among Western Muslims rarely goes beyond the most common expressions such as *bismillāh* [In the name of Allāh], *alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to Allāh], *Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is the Greatest], *subḥāna Allāh* [Glory be to Allāh], *a‘ūdhu billāh* [I take refuge in Allāh], *māshā’ Allāh* [It is the will of Allāh], *fī amānillāh* [Go with Allāh], *astaghfirullāh* [I ask forgiveness from Allāh], *jazāka Allāhu khayran* [Allāh will reward you well], and the occasional *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn* [From Allāh we come and to Him we return]. These Arabic idioms, of course, undergo varying degrees of phonetic and contextual corruption when entering other languages.²⁰

6. The Frequency of *Allāh* in the Arabic Language

The third most commonly occurring word in the Holy Qur’ān is *Allāh*, occurring 2,702 times, not including the *basmalah* (Abū al-Futūḥ 133).²¹ If we include the 113 cases of “In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful,” then we have a total of 2,815 occurrences of the name *Allāh* in the holy book. If we discount particles, it is the most common word repeated in the sacred scripture. As Martin Lings observes in “The Reality of Ṣūfism:” “[t]he name *Allāh* occurs so often that it may be considered as the warp on which the Qur’ānic text is woven” (517). After *Allāh*, the word *rabb* [Lord] is the 12th most common, occurring 970 times, while the word *ilāh* [god] is the 91st most common word, occurring 113 times.

According to David Quitregard’s sample of two million words drawn from all types of publications, such as fiction, drama, essays, historical, geographical and scientific works, magazines from nine countries, newspapers from fourteen countries, films from seven countries, radio programs from twelve countries, television programs from eight countries, children’s books, and literary histories, the word *Allāh* is the 18th most commonly occurring word in the Arabic language,

preceded only by the fourth person singular of the verb “to be,” *kāna* [was], as well as series of articles, prepositions, conjunctions and subject pronouns such as *al-* [the], *min* [from], *wa* [and], ‘*an* [to], *fa* [so], *fī* [in], *lā* [no], *huwwa* / *hiyya* [he / she], *aw* [or], *ilā* [to], *li allā* [so that], *bi* [with / in], *anā* [I], *hadhā* / *hadhihī* [this], *dhalika* and *tilka* [that]. (Quitegard Unit 1). If we drop the articles, prepositions, conjunctions, and subject pronouns, *Allāh* is the most commonly occurring *kalimah* [word] and *ism* [name/noun].²² In Islām, God is one and appropriately appears as the first in the list of most common Arabic words. The 19th most common word, or the second after *Allāh*, is *wāḥid* [one] (Unit 1). The 88th most common word is *muslim*; the 97th is *Islām* (Unit 5); the 120th is *salām* [peace] (Unit 6); the 143rd is *Qur’ān* and the 310th is *rasūl* [messenger]. When we examine the most common words in Arabic we observe a prevalence of religious, spiritually centered, vocabulary.

In Ernest N. McCarus and Raji M. Rammuny’s “Word Count of Elementary Modern Literary Arabic Textbooks,” the name *Allāh* is found in every one of the 11 textbooks which were scanned (146). The fact that the word appears in every textbook demonstrates that this lexical item is one of the most necessary for beginning students. The shortfall of this study, however, is that it only lists the number of texts the word appears in and not how many times it occurs, limiting itself to listing the frequency results found in Jacob Landau’s *A Word Count of Modern Arabic Prose*.

In Landau’s study of 273,178 words from the language of the Arabic daily press, conducted in 1959, the word *Allāh* appeared 296 times, making it the 76th most common word (335). Although a degree of divergence is to be expected between spoken and written language, such a significant reduction of occurrences may demonstrate, if anything, a tendency among the educated secular elite of the Arab world to suppress the natural occurrence of the name *Allāh* in the official Arabic media.²³ The situation seems to have improved, though, as can be seen from a study conducted in February 1999 by Tim Buckwalter in which the word *Allāh* is ranked as the 30th most common word in online Arabic newspaper archives including *al-Ahrām* [Cairo], *al-Bayān* [UAE], *al-Dustūr* [Amman], *al-*

Hayāt [London], *al-Nahār* [Beirut], *al-Rāyah* [Qatar], *al-Riyyād* [Riyadh], *al-Safīr* [Beirut], *al-Sharq al-Awsat* [London] and *al-Waṭan* [Qatar].

7. The Frequency of the Word *God* in Various Languages

7.1 Hebrew

In the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the situation is similar to that of the Holy Qur'ān and the Arabic language, with the name *Elohīm* [god, plural] being the second most common word (Mitchel 1). According to Larry Mitchel's list, *Elohīm* is only preceded by the preposition *el* or towards (Mitchel 1). This is incorrect as *min* [from] and *et* [with or marker for the direct object] are more numerous than *Elohīm*, as well as a number of prepositions that are inseparable from the word to which they are attached. Based on Mitchel's data, and if we discard grammatical items, *Elohīm* would be the most common lexical item out of the 10,000 different words appearing in the Old Testament. The problem, however, is that Mitchel does not seem to have considered the name *Yahweh* in his *Student's Vocabulary for Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic*. Indeed, a search of the Hebrew Old Testament, courtesy of the Blue Letter Bible, using the numbers from Strong's *Exhaustive Concordance*, indicate that the Tetragrammaton יהוה *Yahweh* occurs 6,519 times; אלהים *Elohīm* 2,606 times; אדוני *Adon* [Lord], 335 times; and אל *El* [God], 245 times. Michael Carasik's computer concordance, however, found 6,828 cases of the Tetragrammaton, 2,602 cases of *Elohīm*, 335 instances of *Adon*, and 237 occurrences of *El*. According to the editors of the *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, the Tetragrammaton occurs 6,518 times in the Masoretic text. While these words counts all differ slightly, they clearly indicate that *Yahweh* is the most common noun in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. If we base ourselves on the frequency list on the back of *Biblical Hebrew* by Kittel, Hoffer, and Wright, discarding the words *min* and *et* and some of the other eight particles, the Tetragrammaton is the most common word in the Bible and *Elohīm* is the twelfth. This comes as no surprise since we are dealing with a religious text in the language of the Prophets of Israel.

In a small journalistic corpus of 2,251,976 words prepared by Shmuel Bolosky—including texts from *Haaretz*, *Maariv* and *Yedioth Aharonot*, as well as

some literary texts--the frequency for the word “God” in the Hebrew of the Israeli media is as follows:

Table 1: Frequency of “God” in the Modern Hebrew Media

אלוהים	Elohim	156
השם	hashshem	51
יהוה	Yahweh	30
אל	El	4
אלוה	Eloah	3
אדוני	Adonay	2
אלוהי	Elohay	1
אלוקים	Eloqim	1
אלוקינו	Eloqeynu	1

The frequency of the word *Elohīm* is almost 71 times per million and *Yahweh* is 14 times per million. For the name *Yahweh*, 24 of the 30 occurrences formed part of the collocation “Yahweh Witness” or “Jehovah Witness.” According to Alexandra McCauley’s *Hebrew Word Frequency Database*, a 30 million word corpus of Modern Hebrew drawn from the Israeli newspaper *Ha’aretz*, the word **מִיְהוָה** / *Elohīm*, has a frequency of 1.2 occurrences per million. The personal name of God in Hebrew continues to be exceedingly rare due to the traditional taboo on mentioning the name of the Almighty.²⁴ As a result, the name **יהוה** / *Yahweh* has a mere frequency of 0.5 occurrences per million.

7.2 English

One of the largest systematic word counts ever conducted in the English language studied 17 million words from 6,333 fiction and non-fiction texts used in schools and colleges in the United States in order to provide a meaningful description of the characteristics of the vocabulary students are apt to encounter throughout their schooling. The study found that the word *God* was the 97th most common word, occurring 97 times per million words (Zeno 129). In a study of spoken American English, the word *God* appeared 141 times out of 1,058,888 words drawn from 30 different speakers (Hartvig). In a study of 1 million words,

W. Nelson Francis and Henry Kučera found that the word *God* was the 292nd most common word in English (468). In a study based on a million word corpus of present day English prose, it was found that the word *God* appeared 192 times (Johanson 170).

7.3 Spanish

In Spanish, *Dios* [God] is the 107th most common word, appearing 11,940 times out of a corpus of 7 million words (Rodríguez 17). Clearly one of the most impressive corpora available is Mark Davies’ 100 million word corpus of Spanish from the 1200s to the 1900s. This massive corpus includes 20 million words from the 1200s to the 1400s, 40 million words from the 1500s to the 1700s, and 40 million words from the 1800s to the 1900s. The 20 million words from the 1900s are divided equally among literary texts, oral texts, as well as newspapers and encyclopedias. The 80 million words covering the 1200s to the 1800s are drawn mostly from historical and literary sources. A search of the word *Dios* in the corpus revealed the following:

Table 2: Frequency of *Dios* in Spanish

1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	Total	Literature	OralText
18,993	7,656	14,671	44,837	27,120	7,468	20,408	5,525	2,605	1,657 1,263

A search for the expression *ojalá* [God willing / hopefully: a phonetic adaptation of the Arabic *inshā’ Allāh*] revealed the following:

Table 3: Frequency of *ojalá* in Spanish

1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	Total	Literature	OralText
0	0	0	154	241	226	421	601	179	343 79

While a search for the name *Alá* [Allāh] revealed:

Table 4: Frequency of *Alá* in Spanish

1200	1300	1400	1500	1600	1700	1800	Total	Literature	OralText
6	0	3	64	184	15	33	95	18	53 24

7.4 Portuguese

The Portuguese word for God, *Deus*, appears 24 times in the COMPARA corpus of 685,952 words drawn from 23 source texts from 1980s and 1990s (Frankenberg-García). This may be due to the fact that the Portuguese “are not especially great swearers” and that, “[i]n general, the Portuguese do not have the same variety or imagination in swear words that their tropical cousins [the Brazilians] demonstrate” (Vogensen).

7.5 French

In French, *Dieu* [God] is the 263rd most common word (Escande Unit 14). In a study of the French spoken in Québec, Canada, it was found that the word *Dieu* [God] appeared 342 times out of 125,000 words (Vikis-Freibergs).

7.6 Italian

According to Alphonse Juilland’s *Frequency Dictionary of Italian Words*, the word *Dio* [God] has a total of 27 occurrences, a coefficient of usage of 16.21, a coefficient of frequency of 27, and a coefficient of distribution of 60.02 (110), in a lexical universe of 500,000 words taken from five equal sub-samples of 100,000 words from a multitude of dramatic, fictional, essayistic, periodical, and technical literature (xii). The word *Dio* is the 1,610th most common word in written Italian (441). As for spoken Italian, the word *Dio* occurs 146 times out of 489,616 words drawn from the spoken Italian of various social sectors and regions, including Firenze, Milano, Napoli and Roma (Mauro).

7.7 Rumanian

According to Alphonse Juilland’s *Frequency Dictionary of Rumanian Words*, the word *Zeu* [God] has a total of 105 occurrences, a coefficient of usage of 51.87, a coefficient of frequency of 105, and a coefficient of distribution of 49.40 (398) in a lexical universe of 500,000 words taken from five equal sub

samples of 100,000 words from a multitude of dramatic, fictional, essayistic, periodical, and technical literature (xv). The expression *dumnezeu* or “My God!” has a total of 299 occurrences, a coefficient of distribution of 228.16, a coefficient of frequency of 299, and a coefficient of distribution of 76.31 (111). The word *Zeu* [God] is the 495th most common word in Rumanian (414) and the expression *dumnezeu* [“My God!”] is the 163rd most common (406).

7.8 German

Although the German word for God, *Gott*, is listed among the first thousand concepts in Helen S. Eaton’s *Word Frequency Dictionary* (1.11), subsequent studies have not been able to confirm this claim. In Hyde Flipo’s “Word Frequency Worthäufigkeit: The Top 1,000 Words in German,” based on Projekt Wortschatz from the Universität Leipzig, the word *Gott* does not appear even once. In Amit Dubey’s “Frequency Dictionary of German” the word *Gott* appears only 8 times out of 355,096 tokens from the Negr@ Corpus drawn from German newspapers.

7.9 Latin

In the Perseus Digital Library, the word *Deus* [God] appears 8,976 times out of 2,813,462 Latin words drawn from a multitude of classical sources from Augustus to Vitruvius for a frequency of 31.90 / 10 K (Crane).

7.10 Greek

In the Perseus Digital Library, the word θεός or *Theos* [God] appears 10,655 times out of 4,779,462 Greek words drawn from a multitude of classical sources from Aeschines to Xenophon for a frequency of 22.29 / 10 K (Crane).

7.11 Bengali

The Bengali words for God are *Bhagabān* and *Iśhor*. The first occurs 3 times (Dabbs 20) and the second occurs twice (32) in a corpus of 43,961 words drawn from the February 12, 1962, issue of the *Ananda Bazar Newspaper*, published in Calcutta (Dabbs). The Persian, Urdu, and Arabic names for God, *Khudā* and *Allāh*, did not appear once, perhaps a reflection of Calcutta’s demographics of 76% Hindu and 23% Muslim or the secular nature of the publication.

In the EMILLE/CILL Corpus, there are 21 instances of ঈশ্বর [*Iššor*] in 824,699 words; 138 instances of ভগবান [*Bhagobān*] in 4,824,699 words (3 occurrences in 459,503 spoken words and 135 instances in 4,413,478 written words). The Urdu/Persian খোদা [*Khudā*] has a total of 3 instances in 4,824,699 words (2 occurrences in 459,503 spoken words and 1 in 4,413,478 written words) and আল্লাহ / আল্লা, the Arabic *Allāh*, has 0 instances in 4,824,699 words.

Although Bangla has many idiomatic expressions employing the various names for God, including দুই সতিনের ঘর / খোদায় রক্ষা কর *dui satiner ghar, khoday raksa kar* [Only God can save the family of a man with co-wives]; যেদিকে দশ সেদিকেই খোদা *yedike dash sedikei khoda* [the voice of the people is the voice of God]; রাখে আল্লা মারে কে *rakhe allāh mare ke* [If God protects, none can destroy], among many others; the overall frequency of the words are low in the language. In recent years, Mahfuzur Rahmān has observed an interesting phenomenon: the name *Allāh* in Bangladesh is sweeping away *Khudā* in both the written and spoken language: on billboards, on television, in political discourse and in daily communication by both adults and children. The supplantation of *Khudā* by *Allāh* does not indicate an increase in theocentric expressions. Rather, it reflects the increasing “Islāmization” of the country.²⁵

7.12 Urdu

In Stanislav Martyny’s list of the 100 most frequent words for Urdu, drawn from a corpus of 440,929 words used in the electronic media, the words خدا / *Khudā* [God] or *Allāh* do not appear at all (7-10). Although some words of Persian and Arabic origin do occur in the 100 Urdu key words, which account for 50.65% of the Urdu corpus (11), with the exception of the word *Muslim*, which appears in 74th place (10), they do not form part of a religious lexicon.

In a study of 136,738 words drawn from the Urdu press conducted in 1969, the name *Allāh* appears only 30 times, in the expressions *Allāh tabāraka wa ta’ālā* [Great and Almighty Allāh] and *Allāh ta’ālā* [Almighty Allāh] making it the 576th most common word in the written Urdu of the media (Barker 357).²⁶

The EMILLE/CILL Corpus is, by far, the most extensive source of written and spoken Urdu for lexico-statistics. It consists of 3,020,339, tokens, 473,023 of which are spoken and 2,546,709 which are written. In this database, the name *Khudā* appears 1,157 times, namely, 38 times per million words; written: 30 per million words and spoken: 81 per million words. Interestingly, the name *Allāh* [الله] did not occur even once, nor did *Rabb* [رَبّ], meaning “Lord,” which is the “non-sectarian” name for God. More recent research is required, particularly in the oral realm, as columnists like Aḥmed Bashīr have observed a significant linguistic development in Pakistan, the rapid transformation of *Khudā Ḥāfīz* in Pakistan into *Allāh Ḥāfīz*, possibly as part of an “Islāmic” resurgence, a phenomenon also occurring in Bangladesh (Ḥussein).²⁷

7.13 Hindi

In Stanislaw Martyny’s list of the 100 most frequent words for Hindi drawn from a corpus of 441,153 words used in the electronic media and accounting for 55.61% of the Hindi corpus, the words for god, *Ishvara*, *Parameshyara*, *Paramatma*, *Kartara*, and *Devata*, do not appear. On the basis of this research, the Hindu faith does not appear to have had a major impact on the Hindi language. The 33 million gods from the Hindu pantheon rarely make an appearance in the language of the Hindu media.

In the EMILLE/CILL Corpus, which is based on 13,510,420 tokens, 564,974 spoken ones and 12,942,981 written ones, the name *Ishavara* occurs 291 times, for a frequency of 20 per million words (20 per million words written and 10 per million words spoken). The name *Parameshvara* occurs 93 times (10 per million written words and 0 per million spoken words). *Paramatma* appears 104 times (10 per million words written; and 30 per million words spoken). *Devata* was found 257 times, that is, 20 per million words (20 per million words written and 0 per million words spoken). As for the name *bhag-wan*, it is found 51 times in the Hindi component of the EMILLE Corpus which is 12,510,420 token. Interestingly, all of the occurrences were found among the 13,510,420 for written Hindi. The term did not have a single occurrence in the 564,974 tokens for the spoken language.

The expressions *Khudā Ḥāfiẓ* and *Allāh Ḥāfiẓ* are still in currency in the country. However, as Rizwan Aḥmad has observed during his fieldwork in Dehli, the same phenomenon of dropping the first in favor of the last is also occurring in India. As Ahmad attests, “sometimes it is strange to say *Khudā Ḥāfiẓ* and receive an unexpected *Allāh Ḥāfiẓ*.” Based on the observations of Mahfuzur Rahmān, Aḥmed Bashīr, and Rizwan Aḥmad, this shift appears to be universally affecting the entire Indian subcontinent.

7.14 Bosnian

The *Oslo Corpus of Bosnian Texts* contains approximately 1.5 million words, and comprises several different genres: fiction [novels and short stories], essays, children's stories, folklore, Islāmic texts, legal texts, as well as newspapers and journals. The texts, written by authors from Bosnia and Herzegovina, have for the most part been published in the 1990s. Out of 1.5 million words, *mislim* [Muslim] occurs 496 times, making it the 272nd most common word; *Muslimani* [Muslims] appears 304 times, making it the 443rd most common; *Bog* [God] appears 298 times, making it the 452nd most common; *god* [God] appears 272 times, making it the 497th most common; *muslimana* [Muslim] appears 243 times, making it the 549th most common; *Imām* [(prayer) leader] appears 241 times making it the 555th most common; *Allāh* appears 151 times, making it the 905th most common; *Allāhu* appears 78 times, *Islām* 55 and *Moḥammed* 4 times.

7.15 Turkish

The Turkish words for God include *Allāh*, *Tanrı*, and *İlāh*. In Bigle Say's METU Turkish Corpus, a body of 2 million words drawn from written Turkish texts from various genres including samples from narratives, argumentative editorials and so forth, the word *Allāh* and its inflected and derived forms occur 510 times, including over 20 *Allāh* expressions. The word *İlāh* and its inflected and derived forms occur 61 times; *Tanrı* [God, Father, Almighty, Creator, Divinity, Deity, Eternal, Godhead, the Infinite, and the Providence] and its inflected and derived forms occur 486 times.

7.16 Persian

As the second scholarly and literary language of Islām, Persian deserves particular attention. With the Arabic conquest of the Sāssānīd Empire which took place from 643-650 A.D., a new language, religion and culture were added to the Persian cultural milieu. Arabic became the *lingua franca* or, better yet, *lingua arabica*: the language of government, literature, culture and religion. As a result, Persian, an Indo-European language, became profoundly Arabized, not so much in its grammar, but in its lexicon. According to the *Encyclopedia of the Orient*, 40% percent of the Persian vocabulary is of Arabic origin; according to Gernott L. Windfuhr, Professor of Iranian Studies at the University of Michigan, nativized Arabic loan-words represent 50% of the lexicon but only 25% of the colloquial language.²⁸ Persian is also important because it is the medium through which many words of Arabic origin passed into Turkish, Urdu and other languages.

The *Titus Database* contains several texts in Modern Persian, including, *Vīs va Rāmīn*, Fakhr al-Dīn Gurgānī's (d. 1048) epic poem, where the full form of the name *Allāh* appears once while various form of *Khudā* appear 32 times; *Sindbād-Nāmah* in by Aḥmad bin 'Alī Zāhīrī Samarqandī's in which the expression *b'illāh* [In (the name of) Allāh] appears 4 times and Qabūlī's *Ghazals*, where the various forms of *Allāh* occur 5 times and the name *Khudā* occurs 24 times. Since *Vīs va Rāmīn* deals with a consciously pre-Islāmic milieu, it comes as no surprise that it is skewed in the direction of *Khudā*, as opposed to *Allāh*.

Frequency lists from Šūfī poetry provide a limited look into the frequency or lack thereof of the Persian Allāh Lexicon. In the translation of Rūmī's (d. 1273) *Masnavī*, the word *Allāh* appears 29 times, and *God* 711 times out of a total of 98,681 occurrences of 8,159 word tokens. In the translation of *Gulistān* by Ša'dī, the word *Allāh* occurs 43 times, and the word *God* 84 times out of 54,764 occurrences of 5,984 word tokens. In the translation of *Teachings* by Ḥāfiẓ (d. 14th c.) in his *Teachings*, the word *God* occurs 23 times out of 10,592 occurrences of 2,138 word tokens. In the Packard Humanities Institute's *Persian Texts in Translation*, comprising over 125 classical works, the word *God* appears 5,116 times and the word *Allāh*, 800 times. The frequency analysis of translations, of

course, is unscientific, since, in some cases, the word *Allāh* may be rendered as *God* in English, thus inflating the occurrence of one word over another. Despite its shortcomings, the data indicates that Persian authors--even those who consciously and successfully incorporate many verses of the Qur'ān in Persian meter--tend to refer to God as *Khudā* as opposed to *Allāh*, a fact which can be confirmed by a survey of the original sources.

In Daniela Meneghini's *Lirica Persica Corpus*, which presents 20 separate samples of 1,000 lines take from the *ghazal* collections of 20 great Persian poets, including Sanā'ī, Anvarī, Khāqānī, 'Aṭṭār, Rūmī, 'Irāqī, Ṣa'dī, Amīr Khusraw, Khvājū Kirmānī, Salmān Sāvajī, Ḥāfiẓ, Kamāl Khujandī, Jāmī, Bābā Fighānī, Ahlī, Vaḥshī, Naẓīrī Nīshāburī, Ṭālib Āmulī, Ṣā'ib and Bīdil, the word *Khudā* appears 154 times independently, 10 times in compounds like *khudāparast* [*khodaparast*] and 7 times in derivative forms like *khudāyi* [*khodayi*] As for the word *Allāh*, it occurs 125 times by itself, 15 times in derivative forms and 3 times in compounds.

In Meneghini's *The Ghazals of Ḥāfiẓ: Concordance and Vocabulary*, the word *Ilāh* [*Elah*], in various forms, occurs 39 times; and *Ilāhī* [*Elahi*] 5 times (728). The word *Khudāy* [*Xoday*] appears 122 times (833), and the word *Rabb* or "Lord" occurs 67 times (793). The most ancient of these words, *Yazdān*, appears once (838). The word *Rabb* is thus the 67th most common word in the *Ghazals* (848), followed by *Khudāy* [*Xoday*], the 79th most common (847), and *Ilāh* [*Elāh*], the 223rd most common (848).

Clearly, the Arabic *Allāh* is not particularly prevalent in the Persian sources we have surveyed.²⁹ Again, this may reflect more on Ṣūfī poetry than on the Persian language as the same phenomenon is found in the Arabic Ṣūfī poetry we examined. Case in point: the word *God* appears only once in the English translation of 'Umar Khayyām's *al-Rubā'īyyāt*. The reduced range of the word *Allāh* may also be a reflection of the Ṣūfī predilection for using attributes of *Allāh*, such as *al-Ḥaqq* [The Truth / The Reality] and *al-Ḥayy* [The Living], as opposed to the divine name proper.

The corpora from TITUS and the Şūfī poetry we have surveyed are rather less than ideal to find the frequency correlate of *Allāh* vs. *Khudā* in Persian. Fortunately, Ḥamīd Ḥasanī has recently published a Persian book titled *The Most Frequent Words in Today's Persian*, which includes the 8,000 most frequently used words based on a million word corpus based on 80 texts and over 500 subtexts of contemporary Persian. The texts include 62 books published by IICYA, mostly written over the past ten years, and including 608,350 words; 14 journals from the children and youth sections of newspapers; complete issues of 11 journals and seven pages of seven other issues including 396,240 words. Out of one million words, *Khudā* occurs 580 times while *Allāh* does not appear at all, with the exception of *Ilāhī* which occurs 70 times and *Yā Allāh* [O Allāh] which appears 19 times. According to Ma'sūmeh G. Shāmbayātī, an Iranian sociologist:

[T]he reason for not including *Allāh* in this book may be because we usually don't use it in our communication as it is Arabic and we have a common Persian word for it [*Khudā*]... *Allāh*, most of the time, is used for praying.

This preference for the Persian *Khudā*, *Khudāvand* and *Yazdān* over the Arabic *Allāh* has been established by our frequency analysis of the works of over thirty Persian poets found in the *Persopedia Corpora*.

Table 5: Frequency of “God” in Persian Poetry

Poet	<i>Allāh</i>	<i>Khudā</i>	<i>Khudāvand</i>	<i>Yazdān</i>
Abū Sa‘īd Abī al-Khayr	14	26	1	0
Anvarī	18	12	64	38
Awḥadī Marāghā’ī	6	82	5	6
Bābā Ṭāhir	3	7	0	1
Bahār	1	6	3	7
Parvīn I’tiṣāmī	1	16	4	1
Jāmī	12	16	6	4
Ḥāfiẓ Shīrāzī	21	91	0	1
Khāqānī	125	38	7	17
Khvājū Kirmānī	6	15	6	0
Daqīqī	0	1	3	5
Dihlavī	14	25	15	15
Rūdakī	1	0	5	2
Ṣa’dī	34	70	71	10
Ṣa’d Salmān	0	0	3	1
Sanā’ī	42	20	19	29
Sayf Farghānī	3	6	4	1
Shabistārī	14	6	0	1
Shaykh Bahā’ī	15	15	1	1
‘Ubayd Zākānī	3	16	0	8
‘Irāqī	7	9	0	0
‘Aṭṭār	15	38	7	4
Firdawsī	1	4	179	764
Farūghī Basṭāmī	10	69	4	6
Muḥtasham Kāshānī	5	87	12	9
Manūchihrī Dāmghānī	1	8	21	4
Mawlavī	410	807	96	125
Niẓāmī Ganjavī	10	107	64	35
Shahrīyār	0	29	1	0
Tabrīzī	0	10	1	0
Farrukhī Sīstānī	0	3	22	7
Vaḥshī Bāfqī	16	44	7	4
Hātif Iṣfahānī	12	27	0	0
Nāṣir Khusraw	0	15	87	68
Total	820	1,725	718	1,174

Statistically, the Arabic *Allāh* occurs 820 times and the Persian words for God, 3,617 times, with 1,725 occurrences of *Khudā*, 718 instances of *Khudāvand*, and 1,174 cases of *Yazdān*. Other Persian names for God, like *Parvadiḡār* and *Āfarīnandah*, did not appear at all. The differing use of the various words of God in each author is, in itself, a fascinating subject, worthy of in-depth investigation. For our purposes, it suffices to demonstrate the general preference for the indigenous Persian names for God over the Arabic *Allāh*. The most popular divine name among the Persian poets would be *Khudā*, which has roughly twice the frequency of *Allāh*. In second place is the name *Khudāvand* which is slightly more popular than *Allāh* which comes in third place before *Yazdān* which falls in fourth place. Evidently, this excludes Firdowsī's extensive use of *Yazdān*, which would otherwise tilt the scale.³⁰

All of the data drawn from Persian lexico-statistics indicates that the frequency of word "God" in Persian is similar to that found in other Indo-European languages. A comparative seven-day search of English, Persian and Arabic newspapers conducted in November 2005 seems to corroborate that the Persian use of God is consistent with that found in other languages, with the exception of Arabic, which is unique in this regard:

Table 6: Frequency of "God" in English, Persian, and Arabic Newspapers

Newspaper	Language	Country	Frequency	Word
<i>Toronto Star</i>	English	Canada	15	God
<i>Globe and Mail</i>	English	Canada	28	God
<i>New York Times</i>	English	U.S.A.	63	God
<i>Chicago Tribune</i>	English	U.S.A.	62	God
<i>LA Times</i>	English	U.S.A.	50	God
<i>The Independent</i>	English	U.K.	49	God
<i>IRIB</i>	Persian	Iran	12 / 7	Allāh / Khudā
<i>Iran Newspaper</i>	Persian	Iran	74 / 35	Allāh / Khudā
<i>Iran Daily</i>	Persian	Iran	3 / 0	Allāh/ Khudā
<i>al-Hayāt</i>	Arabic	England	107	Allāh
<i>al-Ayyām</i>	Arabic	Bahrain	+ 100	Allāh
<i>al-Rāyah</i>	Arabic	Saudi Arabia	+ 130	Allāh
<i>al-Khalīj</i>	Arabic	U.A.E.	+ 225	Allāh

As can be observed, the English language newspapers average 45 references to God; the Persian ones average 44 references to God and the Arabic ones average over 140, reasserting its uniqueness. Not factored into the Arabic statistics is *al-Vefagh*, an Arabic-language newspaper published in Iran which reported 38 instances of *Allāh* and one of *Khudā* hinting that the culture of the speaker, and not the language itself, is the driving force behind the *Allāh* Lexicon. How else could one account for the radical reduction in *Allāh*/*Khudā* expressions by Arabic-speaking Iranians?

7.17 Malaysian

In Ian Proudfoot's *Malay Concordance Project*, a survey of a large corpus of classical Malay prose and verse texts covering over 1.7 million words, the name *Allāh* occurs 3,462 times, a total overall average frequency of 2.8 times per 1,000 words. In some individual religious texts, however, the word *Allāh* had a frequency of up to 20.9 / 1,000. The word *tuhan* [god] appears 1,255 times with a frequency of 0.8; *batara* [god] 811 times with a frequency of 1.4; *dewa* [deity] 795 times with a frequency of 0.7; and various forms of *ilāh*, 163 times, including *berilah* 74; *diberilāh* 27 [I take refuge in *Allāh*]; *ilāh* 6; *ilahi* 39, *menberilāh* 15 and *menterilāh* 2. The expression *masya Allāh* appears 4 times, and *māshā' Allāh* [It is the will of *Allāh*] occurs once.

7.18 African Languages:

Fulfulde, Somali, Oromo, Mossi, Swahili, Yoruba, Zarma, Hausa, Wolof, and Mandinka

The Fulfulde or Fulani language is spoken in Central and West Africa, including Sudan, Niger, Mali, Senegal, and Cameroon.³¹ According to Scott Clark, who has worked among the Fulbe for twenty years, Fulfulbe is not a lingua franca in these countries, though in Cameroon it is an important language of wider communication. So, the Fulbe in Nigeria must speak Hausa to get around or Sango in the Central African Republic. According to Paulène Aspel, the Fulfulbe language is "a complex linguistic mixture of old Arabic vocabulary and syntactical forms borrowed either unchanged or Fulanized, usually pertaining to religious matters" (189). This statement gives the impression that Fulfulbe is a

“mixed language,” one having the vocabulary from one language, but the structure from another. This is incorrect. Furthermore, most of the Arabic vocabulary in Fulfulbe is limited to the domains of religion and warfare. The vocabulary of daily life is not “old Arabic vocabulary,” though some devout Muslim Fulbe would no doubt like to think that. While a frequency dictionary does not exist for this language, a survey of its literature reveals a preponderance of Allāh expressions. As Aspel observes, “[t]he Arabic influence seems to be strong...on this kind of literature” which is based on Arabic models (180). According to Aspel, three main types of formulae trigger the attention of the interested one who stands on the threshold of the Fulfulbe poetry from the Adamawa:

He is first greeted with these words: *Allāh senīdo!* [God, the Holy One!]. *Allāh* is the central core word, many times repeated, alone, inflected or in combined expressions. The three categories where it appears are: a) the noun-epithet formulas; b) the prefixed and suffixed *Allāh*, and c) the verb formulas with *Allāh* as object. In 225 lines of a dozen poems by Bellow dow Keerol, *Allāh* alone or in combination appears 51 times. It occurs forty five times in 440 lines of Moodi Yaawa’s ten poems; forty eight times in ten poems and 313 lines by Buuba Jariida; twenty one times in the three poems of 195 lines by Hamaseyo; and four times in each of respectively Isa Dembo and Sambo Didi’s single poem selected. (178)

The most frequent of the noun-epithet formulas is *Allāh senīdo*. Other common forms are *Allāh sarki* [Allāh Almighty], *Allāh teddu’do* [Glorious Allāh], the word *teddu’do* meaning “heavy,” the Hebrew root for “glory,” as well as *Allāh barkini* [Blessed by Allāh]. The most frequent inflected nouns are *lillāhi* [(Praise be) to Allāh], *Allāhi* [Thanks be to Allāh], *wa Allāhi* [By Allāh], *billāhi* [(I seek refuge) in Allāh] and *Bismillāhi* [In the name of Allāh] (179). Other examples of the Allāh Lexicon in Fulfulbe poetry include the anaphora *mi yettoyi Allāh* [I do thank Allāh] in three odes by Hamaseyo, and the formula *Allāh yafam, Allāh hokkam, Allāh hisnam* [Allāh forgive me; Allāh give me; Allāh save me] from the poet Moodi Yaawa (179).

Indeed, as Pierre Francis Lacroix explains in the first chapter of *Poésie peule*, the Fulbe society of Adamawa, “née de l’Islam...en est restée profondément imprégnée” [“Born from Islām...it has remained profoundly marked by it”] (qtd. in Aspel 179). According to all assessments, “Islām in a broad sense has penetrated greatly among the Fulbe” (Shimada 95). The key cultural concepts in Fulbe culture are 1) *pulaaku*, tradition or Fulbeness; 2) *diina* or the Islāmic religion; and 3) *daraja* or honor (VerEecke 146; Kazuhisa Eguchi 181). Among the Fulbe of Adamawa

[r]eligious faith runs deep and sincere, is accompanied by no more superstitious practices or beliefs than subsist among the majority of the Muslims in the Middle East or the Maghrib, and moreover harbours no typically “African” traits. The faith--of a “quality,” dare one say it, which is rather rare in black West Africa--has never been ground down, among the majority of those concerned, by its contact with economic conditions or modern politics, and even seems to have been refined in certain aspects in the last few decades. (Lacroix: 1980: 206)

The most common feature among the Fulbe, from West Africa to the Sudan, is the “[s]trong Islāmic consciousness as the basis of their Islāmic identity” (Hino 84). For the Fulbe, Islām [*diina*] is a significant moral code and ethnic marker:

Its core components include abiding by the Five Pillars of Islām, having piety, faith, “shame,” kindness or charity, mutual respect, along with telling the truth...and raising one’s children in Islām. Because of their similarities, the codes of *diina* and *pulaaku* are said to complement each other. It is not suprising, therefore, to find individuals or even entire communities in Adamawa making little distinction between the two, or considering *diina* a component of *pulaaku*. (VerEecke 148)

For the Fulbe, Islāmization did not induce a simple identity change limited to the religious and moral level: “All aspects of Fulbe lives--moral, religious, economic, material, social, cultural and political--were affected” (Shimada 95).

According to Aspel, “[i]n Fulbe culture, religion and ethics seem to be closely interrelated, the praise of Allāh is constantly blended and/or supported by laudatory verse to the Arab-white color” (Aspel 181). Reading Aspel, one gets the

impression that the Fulbe love Allāh and love the Arabs. This is not exactly the case. It would be hard to find a Fulbe saying that he “loves Allah,”--he would fear Him, but never “love” Him. Furthermore, loving the Arabs would be a stretch. The Fulbe are certainly grateful that the Arabs brought them the message of Islām. However, many of the Arabs come and want them to lose their mother tongue, Fulfulde, in favor of Arabic, something which the Fulbe are generally greatly against. The Sudanese Fulbe, however, often do speak Arabic as their mother tongue instead of Fulfulde as they are in the process of Arabization (Hino 83). Nonetheless, they continue to retain much of their traditional Fulbe culture in their daily life. According to Shun’ya Hino, the Fulbe sometimes criticize the way of life of the Arab Muslims as corrupt and hypocritical, compared to Fulbe piety and profound Islāmic belief (83). This profound commitment to Islām has endowed Fulbe society with a rich oral and written culture saturated with semi-Africanized Allāh expressions. In this regard, the Fulbe are unique among non-Arab Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa.³²

As for the rest of black Africa, the spread of the Allāh Lexicon seems to be associated with the degree of Islāmization and Arabization. In the words of Trimingham,

The spread of a religion possessing a sacred scripture sets up an interrelationship between the sacred language and the languages of the people who adopt the religion. This is especially the case with Arabic. In Hamitic-speaking Africa Islāmization was accompanied by Arabization, and the effect we have shown to be profound, but in Negro Africa Islām was spread almost entirely by Africans and Arabic was not envisaged as a living language. Thus the great divide between white (Hamitic) and black (Negro) Africa has been perpetuated by language, for whilst the spread of Islām has been accompanied by the absorption of words and expressions into African languages, in Negro Africa the mediating factor has been the law books in the memories of the clergy. Arabic in Negro Africa was wholly a sacred language with little or no secular usages. Few colloquial or daily-life words penetrated, [with the exception of expressions like *barka*, *baraka*, *bismillāh*, *inshā’ Allāh*, *wa Allāhi* and *alḥamdulillāh* which are very common among all Islāmized groups in black Africa: the Zarma, the Hausa, the Kanuri, the Fulbe, the Tamacheq, and so forth], but the language of the law books has enriched the languages of Muslims with hundreds of religious, political, commercial and abstract words and expressions. (101) [the addendum is ours]

In much of black Africa, traditional concepts of a supreme power or spirit, a High God, seem generally to be readily identified with Allāh (Lewis 61). For the Somali and the Muslim Oromo, known in the past by the pejorative term Galla, the pre-Islāmic conception of the Cushitic sky god *wāq* had many elements in common with the Muslim idea of Allāh (Lewis 274). Consequently, the god *wāq* was readily assimilated to Allāh (Lewis 61). The Muslim Oromo and the Somali call Allāh by the words formerly used for the Cushitic god, with the same connotations (Lewis 274). Among the Somali, the name *wāq* is used in a common expression of sacrifice (*waqda'in*: lit. "offering to God"). Besides *Alla* and *Wāq*, the Somali also refer to God as *rabbi*, *alle* and *eebbe*.³³ For the Mossi, the otiose deity *winam* became the equivalent of Allāh; and the Nupe equated their traditional deity *soko* with Him as well (Lewis 61). Among the Swahili in East Africa, the traditional creator God *mungu* became associated with Allāh (Lewis 61). The Swahili expression for God Almighty is *Jicho la Mungu*. Besides Mungu and Allāh, the Bantu refer to God as *rabi*, and *rahimi*. They use the expression *wallah* as well as *lahaula*, a truncated form of the Arabic *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*, in the sense of "God forbid!" Like the Bantu, the Yoruba who embraced Islām also identified their traditional High God--in this case *Olorin* or *Olodumare*--with Allāh. Among the Zarma, the name for God is *irikoy*. It is used in expressions like *Irikoy ma albarka daŋ ay izo ga* [May God bless my son]; *Irikoy m'iri cebe yesi (nda baani "or" mansancine)* [May God show us next year (in health "or" as now)]. In the first expression, the Arabic word for blessing has been borrowed along with its article. The word *Allāh* is mainly limited to the oath *walla* used by most Zarmas at the end of statements. It means "by Allāh," and is short for *Wa Allāhi* [(I swear) by Allāh]. Generally speaking, the old term for God is frequently retained alongside the newly acquired term Allāh, and both names are viewed as synonymous, the Arabic term is reserved principally for use in poetry and in stock Arabic expressions, phrases and exclamations, while the indigenous name is invoked in informal subjective prayer [*du'ā*] (Lewis 61; Trimmingham 55).

In the case of cultures where there was apparently no distinct pre-Islāmic name for a supreme deity--if the concept was ever entertained at all--vernacular terms equivalent to the English “Master” or “Lord” are applied to Allāh (Lewis 61). In other instances, the name Allāh came to fill that void. In Hausa, the name for God is Allāh and it is used in various expressions and interjections including: *Inshā’ Allāh* [If Allāh wills]; *Allāh ta’ālā* [Allāh Almighty]; *Allāh yā sawwāk’ā* [Allāh save you]; *Allāh wadankā* [Allāh shall curse you] and *Jallā* [Praise Allāh]. In Wolof the name for God is *yālla*, an Africanized pronunciation of the Arabic *Yā Allāh* or “O Allāh.” Some of the Allāh expressions in Wolof include *Nit ñi ñep deñu wara wox alxamdulilaa* [All people should say Praise be to Allāh]; *Yalla buur la* [Allāh is Great]; *Dagaan yaala lu baaxla* [To worship Allāh is a very good thing] and *Giñ naa ci turi yaala* [I swear in the name of Allāh]. In Mandinka, the name for Almighty God is *Ala*. Godliness is *Ala ñaasilanjo* and fearing God is *Ala ñaasilanjo*. The Mandinka have a rich repertoire of Allāh expressions, including: *Tenturro be Ala ye* [Praise be to Allāh]; *Da n tuku Ala la* [Let’s rely on Allāh]; *Ala le mu soorilaa ti* [Allāh is the one who offers]; *Kana Ala sooki* [Don’t go against Allāh]; *Bannaayaa mu Ala la sooro le ti* [Wealthiness is Allāh’s gift]; *Ala maaitanka la seetani la* [May Allāh protect you from Satan]; *Ala la mansabaayaa man naane soto* [Allāh’s mightiness has no limit]; *Ala maa ñ ñaa jamaa la kayira kono* [May Allāh let us meet again in peace]; *Ala be moo kurunolu jihadi la* [Allāh will torment the evil people]; *Kana Ala fulankafu niñ i mu misilimoo ti* [Don’t associate Allāh with others if you are Muslim]; *Ala mu mansa fondinsire le ti* [Allāh is a merciful King]; *Alaladaaroo* [Allāh’s creation]; *Bisimilaay* [Allāh’s name]; *Yaala rek laa dee jaamu* [I adore only Allāh]; *Jeebalu leen ci yaala* [Give yourself up to Allāh]; *Ala warate le* [Allāh is Great].

7.19 Russian

According to Serge Sharoff’s *Frequency Dictionary for Russian*, which is based on a corpus of 40 million words, the Russian name for God, *Boz*, is the 244th most common word, appearing 376 times. An earlier study conducted by Brown showed it was the 593rd most common word (39). Prof. Lennart Lönngren’s *Uppsala Corpus* of one million Russian words consists of 600

Russian texts equally divided between informative prose from 1985-89 and literary prose from 1960-88, drawn from the works of 40 authors from Abramov to Zorin. The compilers assured that the corpus was representative and varied with vocabulary from 25 different subject areas. Out of one million words in the *Uppsala Corpus*, the word *6or* appears 72 times. As for spoken Russian, the word *6or* appears 31 times in the Corpus of Interviews, composed of interviews conducted from 1996 to the present with topics ranging from music, society, economy, and literature to lifestyle and sports.

7.20 Japanese

In Charles Kelley's *Japanese Newspaper Word Frequency List*, the word *kami* [god] is the 664th most common word out of a corpus of 300,000 words drawn from the Japanese press. However, according to the *List of Japanese Words* published on the web site of the Sakuragoaka High School in Tokyo, Japan, the Japanese word for *god* comes in 4,568th place, appearing only four times, in a corpus of 282,918 word tokens consisting of 8,481 original words collected from a number of 20th century novels and stories. In Tadashi Kikuoka's *Japanese Newspaper Compound: The 1,000 Most Important in Order of Frequency*, the word *かみ kami* [god] does not appear even once. If one looks at the 20 most common words in Arabic, the word Allāh appears prominently. In Japanese, the 20 most common words are related to capitalism, business, money, and government, including: *iin* [committee member], *seefu* [government], *keezai* [economy / finance], *rōdō* [labor], *jimu* [business], *minshu* [democratic], *kaisha* [company / corporation], and so forth. The most frequent Japanese words may reflect a secular materialistic worldview, whereas the most frequent Arabic words may reflect a spiritual worldview. In Japanese, even the concept of God appears to the outsider to manifest a materialistic mentality. Although the Japanese word *kami* is often translated as "god," the word in fact means "spirit," "soul," or "mind." In other words, according to the Japanese worldview, God is in each person's mind; God is the energy inside our intellects, an idea quite similar to the Marxist conception of God as a dimension of human beings. As Masahiko Minami explains,

Japanese religions are naturalistic ones, as can be seen in Shintoism, which grew out of everyday life of the Japanese people in primitive times. The word *kami* has a homophone *kami*, which means “the top, head, or upper part.” This may be my opinion, but *kami* as the god and *kami* as the top are in a sense synonymous.

Although the data regarding the frequency of the Chinese character 神 *kami* or god in the Japanese language is not entirely consistent, it is clear that it is not used very frequently and when it does appear, it is often in conjunction with other characters.

7.21 Chinese

According to Patrick Hassel Zeim’s *5,000 Chinese Characters in Order of Frequency*, the Chinese character for God, or *shén* in Mandarin, is the 226th most common in written texts in modern mainland China. The first 250 characters cover around 60% of any written text in the region. In Tony McEnery and Richard Xiao’s *Lancaster Corpus of Mandarin Chinese*, the word 上帝, *Shang Di* or *Shang Ti* [God, lit. “Lord Above,” “Sovereign Above,” or “Lord On High”] appears 28 times per million words in the written corpus and occurs 14 times per million in Richard Xiao and Hongyin Tao’s *Lancaster Los Angeles Spoken Chinese Corpus*. As for the word *shén*, it occurs 142 times per million in the LCMC and 13 times per million in the LLSCC. According to Jun Da’s “Character Frequency List” from the Xin Yu Si Electronic Books Collection, the word *shén* comes in 159th place with a raw frequency of 22,973, a cumulative frequency of 10,285,196, and a cumulative percentage of 53.5078% based on a 45 million character corpus.

These statistics, it should be noted, are reflective of Chinese society as a whole, the vast majority of which is Taoist and Buddhist. Estimates of the Muslim population in China vary from 1-2% to 10%, namely between 13 to 130 million people out of a total population of over 1.3 billion. According to other sources, the population may range from 20 to 200 million. The Muslims in China are made up of ten officially recognized ethnic minorities: the Uighur, the Karak, the Kyrgyz, the Uzbek, the Tatar, and the Salar who are Turkish people; the

Dongxiang and the Baoan or Bonan who are of Mongolian origin, the Tajik who are of Persian origin; and finally, the Hui, who are of Chinese origin and who represent half of the Islāmic population in the country. Our focus in this section is on the Hui as they are ethnic Chinese. An analysis of the Allāh Lexicon among the other nine Muslim groups should become the subject of subsequent studies.

Determining the frequency of the words Allāh and God among Chinese-speaking Muslims, known as the Hui [pronounced “whey”], is presently impossible and would require the compilation of a corpus of Hui speech. Although the Hui in China primarily speak the language and dialects spoken by the people among whom they live, “they have have nevertheless infused these mainly Chinese (Han) languages with Islamic terminology derived from several sources, including Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and other Central Asian languages” (Gladney 393). Known as “Hui speech” [*Huihui hua*], the phrases and vocabulary items do not comprise a language but serve as linguistic markers of ethnic and religious identity (393). Hui speech represents a unique mix of Chinese and foreign languages, permeated by translations and transliterations of Islāmic lexical items (393).

While Qur’ānic Arabic is used in Hui Islāmic ritual, it has never served as a common language for communication. Hui do use certain Persian and Arabic loan words...that are unintelligible to Han, but these in no way constitute a separate language. Of course, to the Hui themselves, these distinctive non-Han expressions of speech, though not a separate language in any sense, continue to serve as important markers of ethnic identity. (68)

Dru C. Gladney has observed that the use of these terms generally marks outsider/insider status, as Huis often use the Arabic or Persian-derived terms among one another, saving the Chinese terms for when they speak with non-Muslim Han (394). He also noted that daily speech in Hui villages or neighborhoods appeared to be more influenced by Persian, whereas theological terminology used in the mosque by the *ahong* [teacher] and the *manla* [religious student] was dominated more by Arabic-derived terms (394).

The Muslim Chinese traditionally refer to Islām as 清真 *Qing Zhen*, “Pure Way” or “Pure Life.” They also use the more modern term *Yisilam*. The Muslim Chinese refer to Allāh as *Zhen Zhu* [the True Lord or True God], *Zhen Zai* [the Primal Cause]. The Arabic *Allāh* is also used; however, it is phonetically adjusted to Chinese as *An la*, *Ahla*, *Ahlahu*, and *Anlahu*. The Allāh Lexicon of the Hui includes *Bisimingle* [from the Arabic *Bismillāh* or In the Name of Allāh], *Anlahu ahkebai* [Allāh is the Greatest], *Anlahuteahlia* [Great Allāh], *Hudeteahlia* [Most Exalted God], *Yiliaxi*, [My god], *Yizede*, *teahli*, [Most holy and exalted Allāh], *Hangeteahli*, “True God” and *Zhenzhu baoyou* or “Allāh protected me.” The Hui also refer to God as *Hu da*, the Chinese pronunciation of the Persian *Khudā*. They employ the following expressions from the *Khudā* Lexicon: *Balehudaya* [Great God] and *Hudaya* [My God]. They also employ implied Allāh expressions like *Sewabu*, from the Arabic *thawwab*, meaning reward. It is used among the Hui as an expression of thanks with the sense of “May Allāh reward you.” As Hui speech does not contain any non-Chinese verbs, the Allāh Lexicon in Chinese is limited to a body of already integrated expressions with little possibility of further growth and development.

8. Validity of Data and Methodology

The question of the validity of the frequency data we have provided is sure to arise. Some scholars may argue that the results of our research are debatable and questionable. While a frequency analysis based on several hundred or several thousand words can be called into question, the same cannot be said of comprehensive studies in corpus linguistics based on hundreds of thousands and even millions of words drawn from a multitude of sources, both written and spoken, as the larger the size of the sample, the greater is the probability of its accuracy. While more work should be done on the subject, the corpora we have consulted, which represent 50 to 100% of the vocabulary of their respective languages, are statistically sound and relatively accurate in representing lexical frequency.³⁴ Those who object to these results may simply not want to give weight or import to this body of theocentric language or see how its presence or absence could impact comfort, confidence, and faith. If there is room for debate, it

resides primarily in the realm of interpretation. It may be argued that the religiosity of a people cannot be determined solely on the basis of one word: *Allāh* or its equivalent in other languages. However, this would be a misconstruction of our methodology. Our objective in this study is not to assert that Arab Muslims are more religious than others, but to establish, through an initial analysis, that the Arabic language possesses a unique language feature: an unusually high preponderance of religious, theocentric, invocations and idioms, worthy of investigation. Having established the frequency of *Allāh* in the Arabic language, we can now examine its function.

9. Surprises

When we started this study, we postulated that the spread of Islām among Arabs, Persians, Indians, and other groups of people, led to an “Islāmization” of both language and culture. We expected to find that the frequency of the Allāh Lexicon was highest in Arabic, then in Persian, then in Urdu, then in other Islāmic languages. We predicted that the longer a people have been Muslim and the more deep-rooted the Islāmic influence has been, the more entrenched the Allāh Lexicon would be in their languages in both frequency and diversity. The Arabs were the first to embrace Islām, then the Persians, the Turks, the Indians, and other nations of the world. The longer a people have been exposed to Islām, we believed, the more they had infused in the Muslim faith, the more their language would reflect their religion. We anticipated that Arabic would use more Allāh expressions than other Islāmic languages, but we expected those Islāmic languages to use Allāh expressions to a great extent. From the onset, we were convinced that, at the very least, the frequency of the word *God* would be higher among Muslims than among non-Muslims. We were certainly in the wrong.

Although there is no doubt that Arabic is an ocean of Allāh expressions, and that the word *Allāh* is the most frequent lexical item in the Arabic language, the same cannot be said about other “Islāmic” languages. As can be seen from the following chart, the frequency of the word “God” is a salient and most distinguishable feature of the Arabic language, regardless of variations in corpora and methods of frequency analysis:

Table 7: Frequency Ranking for “God” in Eleven Languages

Language	Frequency Ranking for “God”
Arabic	1 st , 3 rd or 18 th to 76 th
English	97 th to 292 nd
Spanish	107 th
Chinese	159 th to 226 th
Russian	244 th
French	263 rd
Rumanian	495 th
Urdu	576 th
Bosnian	905 th
Italian	1,610 th
Japanese	664 th to 4,568 th

This unusually high frequency of the word *Allāh* is not found in other languages of Islām. In Malaysian, the word *Allāh* appears 2.8 times per 1,000 words. The Bengali words for *God* rarely occur at all in the printed Bengali of Calcutta. The word *Allāh* is the 576th most common word in the language of the Urdu press, meaning that Russians, after 70 years of atheistic communism, may refer to God almost as often as Pakistani Muslims do. In the Persian sources we have examined, the word *Allāh* is not particularly prevalent. It may be argued that, from a very early time, the Persian / Urdu *Khudā* came to function as a substitute for *Allāh* and this explains the lower incidence of *Allāh* expressions.³⁵ The preference of the Persian *Khudā* over the Arabic *Allāh* is not an unusual or unexpected phenomenon, but rather the natural result of Persian linguistic nationalism. It does not, however, explain the reduced rate of religious expressions in Persian, using *Allāh* or *Khudā*.

The Persians do indeed use some common *Allāh* expressions like *bismillāh* [In the name of *Allāh*], *inshā’ Allāh* [*Allāh* willing], *subhāna Allāh* [Glory be to *Allāh*], *lā ilāha illā Allāh* [There is no god but *Allāh*], *alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to *Allāh*], *astaghfirullāh* [I ask forgiveness from *Allāh*], *fatabārak Allāh* [Praise and Might belongs to *Allāh*], *a’ūdhu billāh* [I take refuge in *Allāh*], *tawakkaltu ‘alā Allāh* [I put my trust in *Allāh*] and *la’natu Allāh* [May *Allāh*

curse], but their general inclination is to employ *Khudā* in virtually every other instance. This is consistent with Yāvar Dehghānī's impression that "the word *Allāh* is just restricted to religious contexts [*Allāhu Akbar*, *Bismillāh*]; otherwise, it is only the word *Khudā* which is used in conversation." The relatively rare use of the name *Allāh* in Persian is curious since much, if not the majority, of its vocabulary is taken from Arabic.

While Urdu speaking Muslims say both *Khudā Ḥāfiẓ* and *Allāh Ḥāfiẓ*, the Persians only say *Khudā Ḥāfiẓ*. Some insist on saying *la'natu Khudā* [May *Khudā* curse] rather than *la'natu Allāh* [May *Allāh* curse] and *Bināmi Khudā* [In the name of *Khudā*] rather than *Bismillāh* [In the name of *Allāh*]. Rather than saying *Allāh yu 'ṭik al-ṣiḥḥah* [May *Allāh* give you good health], they say *'āfiyyah* [good health] and instead of *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji 'ūn* [From *Allāh* we come and to Him is our return] they say *tasliyyah* or "my condolences."

In the time of the Shah of Iran, the traditional greeting was a simple *salām* [peace]. With the advent of Khomeini's revolution, the complete Islāmic greeting, *salāmu 'alaykum*, came into vogue, as did other Arabic expressions. With the polarization of the Iranian populace into conservatives and reformers, many "progressive" people have returned to their old linguistic habits of saying *Khudā* rather than *Allāh* in an attempt to disassociate themselves from the religious right.

With the exception of Arabic, the data indicates that the word "God" often appears less in "Muslim languages" than it does in traditionally "Christian languages," although in the Islāmic world, its use is viewed as pious, whereas in the Christian world, it is primarily pejorative. In English, the word "God" either the 97th, 192nd, or 292nd most common word. In Spanish, it is the 107th most frequent; in French it is the 263rd or the 342nd most common. In Rumanian, it is the 495th, in Russian the 593rd, and in Italian the 1610th. In Latin, the word for *God* appears 31.90 times per 10,000 while in Greek it appears 22.29 times per 10,000. We expected that the word *God* would be found more frequently in the traditional languages of Roman Catholicism like Italian, French, Rumanian and Spanish. The high frequency of the word *Dios* in Spanish came as no surprise. However, the relatively low frequency of the word *God* in Rumanian and

especially Italian, the home of the Vatican and the bastion of the Roman Catholic Church, certainly did. For one reason or another, Allāh expressions have not spread to a great extent beyond Arabic into the other traditional languages of Islām. The question is why?

10. Linguistic and Socio-Cultural Limitations of the Allāh

Lexicon:

The length and time a people have been Muslim clearly has no impact on the extent of the Allāh Lexicon in a given language. This may be the result of certain socio-cultural or linguistic limitations that play a role in curtailing its spread. Languages, as we know, are reflections of the people who speak them. They are mirrors of mentalities and culturally based constructions. According to Louis Massignon, Semitic languages reflect a monotheistic mindset, whereas Indo-European languages reflect a polytheistic one.³⁶ He explains:

The limited truth, unduly characterized by the theory of Aryan superiority, is that the general grammatical characteristics (vocabulary, morphology, syntax) of our Indo-European languages determine that when an idea is expressed in them, its outer form will differ entirely from its clothing in a Semitic language. The idea's Aryan presentation, the only one familiar to Western Orientalists, is periphrastic, made of words with unstable, shaded contours and changeable endings, words fit for apposition and combination. Very early on, verbal tenses in these languages become relative to the agent, egocentric, polytheistic; the words also have a didactic order, and are arranged in long hierarchical periods by means of graduated conjunctions. The Semitic presentation of the idea is gnomic, employing rigid words with immutable and always noticeable roots. The few changes allowed are internal and abstract: consonants are interpolated for the general meaning, vowels altered for the precise shade. The conjunctive role of particles is inseparable from the vocalic changes in endings; verbal tenses, even today, are absolute (they concern only the action) and theocentric (they affirm the transcendence and imminence of the One Agent); and finally, word order is lyrical, with phrases parceled into staccato formulas, condensed and autonomous. Whence the misunderstanding of those who, unable to perceive the powerful, explosive concision of Semitic languages, pronounce them unfit for mysticism. They are, after all, the languages of revelation of the transcendent God, of the Prophets, and of the Psalms. (47-48)

This view of the innate monotheism of Semitic languages is also expressed by Jean Grosjean in his “Preface” to Denise Masson’s French translation of the Holy Qur’ān:

Le lecteur français doit toutefois se rappeler que, voilées par nos langues indo-européennes, les notions sur lesquelles se fonde tout monothéisme sont évidentes dans les langues sémites. Par exemple, le verbe y exprime plus le mode que le temps. Ses formes indiquent avec naturel si l’acte non seulement est subi ou se réfléchit mais encore son intensité, son intention, son effet ou sa cause, sa réciprocité, etc. Au contraire, nos précisions de temps sont secondaires et ne s’obtiennent que par des moyens accessoires. Les deux seuls temps réels ne font que distinguer entre ce qui est achevé, certain, et ce qui ne l’est pas, sans préjuger l’époque, au point qu’une action future peut être déjà faite. (iii-iv)

[The French reader will recall that, while we are veiled by our Indo-European languages, the basic notions of monotheism are evident in Semitic languages. For example, the verb expresses more the mood than the tense. Its forms indicate naturally whether the act is not only received or reflected but also its intensity, its intention, its cause or effect, its reciprocity, etc. On the contrary, our precisions of time are secondary and are only obtained through secondary means. The two tangible tenses merely distinguish between what is completed and certain and that which is not, without indicating the period of time, to the extent that a future action may also be completed.]

As descendants of Abraham through Isaac, the Jews belong to a long tradition of monotheism. The ancient Jews were not fond of fiction, and produced little secular literature. They viewed any literature that stemmed from other than God as suspicious. They reveled in revelation, however, and produced a rich body of religious works. Just as their religion differed from the ancient religions insofar as it is founded on the idea of one God, who is infinitely just, omnipotent and omnipresent, so did their language which reflected this Abrahamic monotheism.³⁷

As descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, the Arabs also belong to a long tradition of monotheism. Although they strayed from the straight path, like the Jews did on many occasions, and turned to idolatry, the Arabs returned to their ancestral monotheism with the advent of Muḥammad.³⁸ Since then, the Arabic language has been immersed in an ocean of Islām and the sublime sophistication

of the language of the Qur'ān became the standard for Arabic grammar.³⁹ As Islām spread among the Arabs so did new Islāmic Allāh-centric expressions, which have evolved and expanded over the course of the centuries.⁴⁰

While a process of Islāmization occurred among non-Arabic-speaking Muslims, it does not seem to have gone far as it did among the Arabs, at least not in the area of language. Not all Muslim nations were Islāmized to the same extent. Consequently, the interpretation and application of Islām manifests varying levels of cultural saturation.⁴¹ The Amazigh or Berbers of North Africa, for example, have been Muslims almost as long as the Arabs; however, their culture has not been Islāmized to the same extent as the Arabs and some Berbers continue to hold on to some pre-Islāmic customs and superstitions.⁴² Likewise, many Indonesian Muslims continue to mix Hindu and Buddhist traditions with their Islāmic practices.⁴³ The same applies to many African-Americans who combine Black Nationalism and Islām, and many African blacks who practice a blend of Islām and animism.⁴⁴ Superficial Islāmization, rather than the length of time a people have been Muslim, may represent the key factor affecting the preponderance of the Allāh Lexicon.⁴⁵

If we assume that all Muslims have been equally Muslimized, the answer to the limited spread of the Allāh Lexicon to others languages may be found in the Qur'ān. Recited exclusively in Arabic in ritual contexts, the Qur'ān has not been readily available in translation until modern times. Even today, the vast majority of non-Arab Muslims read the Qur'ān in its original Arabic, rarely understanding a word. Among the Arabs, the regular recitation of the Qur'ān exposes listeners to multitude of Allāh expressions which are understood and integrated into daily speech. With this information in mind, it becomes clear why the vast majority of Allāh expression have not spread outside of Arabic: they were simply not understood.

Arabic speakers and Muslims in general are quite conscious of the latent function of Allāh expressions like *inshā' Allāh*. In fact, failure to utter the phrase when speaking of future events is often accompanied by a sense of guilt and even fear of divine punishment. In the Arabic and Islāmic worlds, it is widely believed

that if a wish is not fulfilled, it is because the words “Allāh willing” were not mentioned. Muslim children, both Arab and non-Arab, are taught from a young age to always say *inshāʾAllāh* when speaking of future events. Allāh expressions are not strictly ritualistic or formulaic.⁴⁶ They form an integral structural and cultural component of the Arabic language, a reflection and reminder of the Allāh-centricity of the Arabic language and civilization. The French formula, *Je vous prie, Monsieur, de bien vouloir accepter mes salutations distinguées*, [lit. “I beg you, Sir, to accept my distinguished salutations”], the equivalent of “yours truly,” is clearly a formulaic form of politeness.⁴⁷ Years of exposure to Arabic-speaking Muslims lead us to believe that Allāh expressions are often used with a comprehension of their meaning.⁴⁸ When Arabic speakers invoke Allāh and bless and pray for people, they do so consciously as an act of piety or a religiously or culturally prescribed act of politeness.⁴⁹ Otherwise, they may remain quiet or use ordinary, non-religious expressions of politeness such as *shukran* [thank you], *ʿafwān* [welcome], *min faḍlik* [please], and so forth. Since both religious and non-religious forms of politeness exist in Arabic, the use of the Allāh Lexicon may be the result of a choice.⁵⁰ Religious Arabic Muslims may make a greater effort to use Allāh expressions while secular Arabic Muslims may try to drop them altogether. Some religious Arabic Muslims will drop the Allāh Lexicon when conversing with non-Muslims. Likewise, Christian Arabs, particularly those from Lebanon, often opt for expressions which do not have Islāmīc associations or implications: for example, preferring *ṣabāḥ al-khayr* over *salāmu ʿalaykum*.⁵¹ It is thus clear that the use of the Allāh Lexicon is conscious and is more than merely ritualistic or formulaic.⁵²

Due to the profound Islāmīc influence on the Arabic people and their language, Allāh expressions integrate easily into the language. They are so common that they are even used by non-Muslim Arabic speakers, be they Jewish or Christian. While *Allāh yuʿṭik al-ṣiḥḥah* [May Allāh give you health!] may come naturally in Arabic, it is not quite as easy to integrate it into other languages.⁵³ As Castleton has noted, such phrases reflect an insignificant cultural component and have little extended social meaning within the context of English-

speaking traditions (2000a). As El-Sayed has pointed out, “whatever the quantity, the frequency, or the degree of fixedness of formulas in a pair of languages, we are likely to find instances where a fixed formula in one language is not readily paired with any corresponding formula in the other” (1990: 5). In other words, in many traditionally non-Islāmic languages, there are simply no equivalent expressions.⁵⁴ As Castleton explains:

Familiar English interjections such as “By God” and “Great God, Almighty,” although identical lexically to their Arabic partners in the *Allāh* Lexicon--*wa Allāh* [By Allāh], and *Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is the Greatest]--nevertheless do not constitute, in English, authentic components of what Wardhaugh calls “a speech repertoire,” a group of words and phrases of compelling importance to verbal and written discourse within a particular speech community (124). He expands on this concept by clarifying that a linguistic repertoire represents lexical choices which speakers use to connect themselves with their community, often in very subtle ways. The English expressions above may well be used by native English speakers as exclamation or comment but there is nothing in the literature which suggests that their use assists the speaker to bond more tightly with their chosen group. (2000a)

As a result of some or all of these factors, Muslim minorities in the West, reverts or immigrants, are hesitant and reluctant to say *Allāh* in its original Arabic and may opt for an equivalent in Western languages. As a result, *Allāh* is lost in translation. Arabic speakers who are accustomed to *Allāh* expressions often make a conscious effort to drop them, or merely whisper them or mention them in their mind, when speaking other languages.⁵⁵ This is code repression as opposed to code switching and contributes to loss of culture, faith and identity.⁵⁶

11. Conclusions

In the previous pages we have examined the degree of frequency of the word *Allāh* in the Arabic language with a particular focus on expressions and invocations. We have seen that the Arabic language has the unique honor of being the only language in the world where the word *Allāh* or “God” is the most frequently occurring content word in its lexicon. We have seen that the Arabic language is saturated with a rich variety of expressions invoking *Allāh* explicitly

or implicitly and that the name *Allāh* permeates both spoken and written Arabic to the point where we can speak of the omnipresence of Allāh in the Arabic language. As a result, an Arabic speaker could scarcely conceive of a conversation where the name of God would not appear. Surely, there are few situations that do not encourage or require the use of the Allāh Lexicon as it forms a fundamental, natural and essential aspect of the Arabic language, binding identity and culture to language and religion.⁵⁷ We have observed that the Allāh Lexicon exists to a much lesser degree among non-Arabic-speaking Muslims, and that the length of time a people have been Muslim bears no relation to the frequency of Allāh expressions in their language. We have demonstrated that the word *Allāh* has the highest functional yield in the Arabic language and is not nearly as prevalent in the other languages of Islām. The great Nicaraguan writer, Rubén Darío, was certainly right when he described Arabic Muslims as “las razas más creyentes del orbe” (OC 3: 956) [“the most believing races on earth”].⁵⁸ Arabic is truly the language of Islām, the language of the Qur’ān and the language of Allāh.⁵⁹

End Notes

¹ Editor's Note: The expression "the Allāh Lexicon" was coined by our colleague Barbara Castleton.

² Editor's Note: Arabs and Muslims often refer to Arabic as literally "the language of Allāh." This is often taken to mean that Allāh's language is Arabic, a notion with no basis in reason or religion. In Sūrat Ibrāhīm [Abraham], Almighty Allāh says "We sent not an apostle except [to teach] in the language of his own people, in order to make [things] clear to them" (14:14). In his commentary to this verse, Muḥammad Hamīdullāh explains that:

Les commandements divins sont...révélés dans autant de langues que de prophètes cependant que Dieu est au-dessus du son et de la langue. On peut le comprendre peut-être par la métaphore que la révélation est comme le courant électrique incolore et invisible; venant de la génératrice, il prend la couleur et la force de la lampe qu'il illumine. Le prophète est comme la lampe, sa langue est la couleur de la lampe, et son rang est la force de la lampe. (255)

[Divine commandments are...revealed in as many languages as there were prophets despite the fact that God is above both sound and language. Perhaps this can be understood by means of metaphor: revelation is like an invisible and colorless electrical current. When it comes from the generator, it takes the color and the power of the lamp it enlightens. The prophet is like a lamp, his language is the color of the lamp, and his rank is the power of the lamp].

Hence, if the Arabic language deserves the title of "the language of Allāh" it is because of its preponderance of Allāh phrases. It must be noted, however, that Arabic existed prior to Islām and, as taught in non-Arabic and even Arabic-speaking venues, does not focus on the Allāh Lexicon as a functional element in the language. Since the Allāh Lexicon is a religious, cultural and structural component, fluency in the Arabic language cannot be attained without mastery of Allāh expressions, for true linguistic literacy requires cultural literacy as well. As Maḥmūd Ḥusein Šāliḥ and Ḥusein S. 'Abdul-Fattāḥ confirm, "It is axiomatic by now that developing one's communicative competence in his native language or in a second language entails learning their respective routinized utterances, including of course the routinized oath expressions" (113). Clearly, the Allāh Lexicon is an essential aspect of daily discourse and culture.

³ Editor's Note: Literature is also a means of understanding culture. As we explain in "Étude comparée de la *Chanson de Roland*, le *Poema de mio Cid* et le *Rawḍah Khani*,"

La littérature est le reflet d'une société. Si nous examinons la littérature d'un peuple à un moment donné historique, cela nous permet de comprendre de nombreuses choses au sujet de la vie de cette époque, des conditions sociales et des idées prévalentes. La littérature nous permet de pénétrer dans la mentalité ou la psychologie d'une société ou d'une partie de celle-ci, nous permettant de comprendre la vision du monde de ses gens et leur comportement d'une façon beaucoup plus concrète et profonde que les livres d'histoire nous permettent. (32)

[Literature is the reflection of a society. If we examine the literature produced by a people at a given moment in history, it enables us to understand many things about the life of the period, social conditions and prevalent ideas. Literature allows us to penetrate into the

mentality or psychology of a society, or part thereof, enabling us to understand its worldview in a much more profound and concrete way than history books permit.]

⁴ Editor's Note: Since this work falls under the general category of sociolinguistic research, rather than something more purist, our job is not to sort out the chicken and the egg. It is sufficient that the vastness of the Allāh Lexicon, which arose through the distinctions drawn by Muḥammad, should have altered the thought-patterns of Muslim Arabic speakers as a consequence. Readers can disagree with aspects of this and still find the topic valuable.

⁵ Editor's Note: Even simple concepts such as "bread" are viewed differently from culture to culture. The word "bread" does not conjure the same images in the mind of Europeans as it does among Americans, African or Asians. In Egyptian colloquial Arabic, the word for bread is *'ish* or "[source of] life," conveying the vital importance of this staple food. For detailed examples of differences in language and worldview see "Languages" in Richard Hooker's *Cultures in America*.

⁶ Editor's Note: Cultural studies, which bring together in interdisciplinary equilibrium the various fields of anthropology, philosophy, cognitive psychology, religious studies, and sociology, among others, is inconceivable without linguistic considerations of the psycho-biology of language and its relationship to culture.

⁷ Editor's Note: *Aḥādīth* is the plural of *ḥadīth* and refers to the sayings of Prophet Muḥammad and, for the Shī'ites, the Twelve Imāms from his Household.

⁸ Editor's Note: A *ḥadīth qudsī* or sacred *ḥadīth* is a tradition in which the Prophet Muḥammad quotes Almighty Allāh. The *aḥādīth qudsīyyah* include revelations not included in the text of the Qur'ān. One of the best collections of sacred *aḥādīth* from Shī'ite sources is *Kalimāt Allāh* compiled by Shirāzī. Unfortunately, no idiomatic English translation of this text is available. The most complete collection of sacred *ḥadīth* from Sunnī sources is *al-Aḥādīth al-qudsīyyah* compiled by the Committee of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth of the Higher Council for Islāmic Affairs in Egypt. It consists of all the sacred *ḥadīth* found in the six canonical collections and in Mālik's (d. 795) *al-Muwatta'*, containing four hundred sacred *aḥādīth* with variants where they occur. For an informed introduction to the sacred *aḥādīth*, refer to Ezzeddīn Ibrāhīm and Denys Johnson-Davies' *Forty Ḥadīth Qudsī*.

⁹ Editor's Note: *Takbīr* is the act of saying *Allāhu Akbar* or "Allāh is the Greatest."

¹⁰ Editor's Note: An example would be the famous *tasbīḥ* the Prophet prescribed for his daughter, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (d. 631-32), which consists of reciting *Allāhu Akbar* 34 times, *alḥamdulillāh* 33 times and *subḥāna Allāh* 33 times. The *ḥadīth* is found in both Sunnī and Shī'ite canonical texts, including Majlisī's (d. 1627-28) *Bihār al-anwār*. See chapter 40 of Ordoni's *Fāṭimah the Gracious*.

¹¹ Editor's Note: By "traditional Islām," we refer to the true Islāmic intellectual and hermeneutic traditions of the mainstream Sunnī, Shī'ah and Ṣūfī, as opposed to the reductionist, revisionist, literalist, essentialist and innovative interpretations of Islām made by the *wahhābiyyah* and *salafīyyah* who, in an effort to "return to the roots of Islām" and "follow the letter of the law," as opposed to its spirit, wish to disregard and even wipe out over fourteen centuries of sound scholarship. For further details on Wahhābism, refer to *Wahhābism: A Critical Essay*, by Ḥamid Algar and Luis Alberto Vittor's insightful remarks in "El Islam shī'ita: ¿ortodoxia o heterodoxia?" on pages 19-22, soon to be available in our critically annotated translation under the title of *Shī'ite Islām: Orthodoxy or Heterodoxy?*

¹² Editor's Note: *Tasbīh*, literally, the recitation of *subhāna Allāh* [Glory be to Allāh] is used in the general sense of praising God, while *taḥmīd* means the saying of *alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to Allāh].

¹³ Editor's Note: As such, the Allāh Lexicon is used to varying degrees by all Arabic speakers, regardless of their religion, showing the pervasive effect of the dominant culture.

¹⁴ Editor's Note: Despite being antithetical to Islāmic values, popular Arabic music makes common use of secularized Allāh expressions. Islāmic music, regardless of its language of expression, invokes Almighty Allāh in perpetual praise. In North America, rapper Malik Shahīd employs the Shī'ite war-cry *Allāhu Akbar*, *Ya Husayn* as a chorus in his song "The War of the One" while singer Ṣafīyyah combines English and Arabic Allāh phrases in her *Flowers of Faith: Islāmic Songs for Children*. In the U.K., Yūsuf Islām, formerly known as Cat Stevens, has produced numerous Islāmic songs utilizing the Allāh Lexicon in English and Arabic. In Malaysia, the Muslim music group Raihān reached international stardom with their Islāmic songs interlacing Allāh expressions in Arabic and Malaysian. In Pakistan, Nusrat Fateḥ 'Alī Khān, and other Qawwālī musicians, spread the Allāh Lexicon in a combination of Arabic and Urdu. In the U.K., Sāmī Yūsuf has harmoniously combined the Arabic-English Allāh Lexicon in his CDs: *al-Mu'allim* and *My Ummah*. In Morocco and other Arabic nations, Allāh expressions are the cohesive element in the ever popular *nashīd* and *amdāh*, Islāmic songs, praises, and odes. *Allāh* is further used freely in Arabic love songs, music videos and by the most liberal of society's artists, and without any religious or transcendent intent--it is merely part of the lingo in such cases.

¹⁵ Editor's Note: In Arabic, traditional Islāmic medicine is known as *Yūnānī* or Greek Medicine. It consists of a combination of Prophetic, Galenic and Arab medicine. In countries like India, Islāmic medicine is a combination of *al-ṭibb al-nabawī*, or prophetic medicine, and Ayurvedic medicine. In any of its forms, Muslim medicine seeks to heal both spirit and body. The spiritual needs are addressed through verses from the Holy Qur'ān, by seeking protection with the names of Allāh, the Exalted, seeking intercession and prayer. The physical needs are addressed through herbal medicine. For hundreds of examples of the Allāh Lexicon used for medicinal purposes, refer to *Islāmic Medical Wisdom: The Ṭibb al-'A'imma*, translated by Batool Ispahāny and edited by Andrew J. Newman, as well as *al-Ṭibb al-nabawī*, by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyyah (d. 1350).

¹⁶ Editor's Note: According to one study, "72 percent of Muslims voted for Bush, 19 for Ralph Nader...and merely 8 percent for Gore" (Reichley 345). While President Bush's use [or abuse] of the word *God* was meant to appeal to the religious right, he seemed to have reaped an unforeseen benefit, the Islāmic vote, with Muslims voting for him in masses, perhaps inspired, consciously or subconsciously, by his repeated references to God. However, as a result of Bush's foreign policy, Muslims as an American minority have categorically reviewed this habit. For more on religion in American civil life, see *With "God on our Side?" How American "Civil Religion" Permeates Society and Manifests itself in Public Life* by Bruce Murry, available online at: http://www.facsnet.org/issues/faith/civil_religion1.htm#god.

¹⁷ Editor's Note: Davies concurs that "the English-speaking learner of Arabic is likely to be struck, sooner or later, by the proliferation of religious references in formulas" (81). Such extensive use of religious expressions in daily discourse and interaction demonstrates the dominance of Islāmic ideology in the life of Muslim communities ('Abd el-Jawād 2000: 219).

¹⁸ Editor's Note: Further research on frequency and distribution, both regional and social, of Allāh across the Arabic-speaking world is much needed and would be a valuable contribution to scholarship. As Schmidt observes, "almost everything that sociolinguistics can discover about the sociolinguistic patterning of Arabic will have some relevance for the teaching and learning of Arabic as a second language" (55). When it comes to the Allāh Lexicon, in many areas

impressions, as opposed to data, dominate. It is clearly established that Allāh expressions permeate both classical and colloquial Arabic. However, is there any particular dialect where they are used more prolifically than others? The issue of regional differences in the frequency of the Allāh Lexicon needs to be researched, as does its relation to education and social class and the particular contexts in which they are used.

Research has so far focused primarily on positive Allāh expressions as opposed to negative Allāh expressions such as *Allāh y'aṣīk ḥummā* [May Allāh give you fever!] and *Allāh yal'anak* [May Allāh curse you!]. As 'Abd el-Jawād observes, "despite its linguistic and sociocultural richness, high functional load, and high frequency," conversational oaths "in an Arabic context has been unduly neglected to the extent that it has rarely been studied as a linguistic phenomenon" (2000: 220). 'Abd el-Jawād's study on "Swearing in Arabic" provides a good overview, demonstrating that swearing "is not just a routine formula with low functionality; it is a cultural index with a wide range of communicative functions" (2000: 239). Sadok Masliyah's article "Curses and Insults in Iraqi Arabic" has also provided a large list of negative Allāh expressions; however, more work needs to be done on similar expressions in other Arabic dialects.

Studies also need to be conducted to determine whether there are any gender differences when it comes to the use of the Allāh Lexicon. Several studies have demonstrated that unlike women in the rest of the world, Arabic-speaking females tend to approximate standard Arabic to a lesser degree than Arabic-speaking males: "male speakers consistently use the standard linguistic forms more than women" ('Abd el-Jawād 1981: 324); "women use the standard prestigious forms in both careful and casual styles less often than men" (1983: 103); "male informants use more prestigious forms than females" (Kojak 1983: 4); Cairene speakers "did not fit the Western sociolinguistic model [because of] the absence of any apparent greater sensitivity on the part of women to the prestige of the classical / standard norm" (Schmidt). Ibrāhīm's study, "Standard and Prestige Language: A Problem in Arabic Sociolinguistics," which insists that "All available data indicates that Arab women in speaking Arabic employ the locally prestigious features...more than men" (124) does not debunk the aforementioned studies and merely demonstrates a difference of opinion as to what constitutes prestigious Arabic. For 'Abd el-Jawād, Schmidt and Kojak, it is classical Arabic; for Ibrāhīm, it is colloquial Arabic as spoken by the urban elite. As to the direction women's speech takes in the Arabic world, the jury is still out. Abū Haidar, for example, challenged Ibrāhīm's findings. In her study of a speech group of Baghdādī men and women, Abū Haidar showed that in Baghdād the prestige variety of spoken Arabic was in the direction of literary or classical Arabic and that women, more than men, tended to favor this variety, generally eschewing stigmatized forms of the urban vernacular (Emery 198). As female Arabic speakers tend to use less classical Arabic than their male counterparts, it might be assumed that their Allāh expressions are drawn more from *'ammiyyah* [the vernacular] than from *fuṣḥā* [the formal literary language].

It would also be interesting to note if female Arabic speakers prefer some expressions over others; for example, formulas of compassion and mercy as opposed to formulas of wrath and divine retribution. Accordingly, 'Abd el-Jawād observes that

women, especially older ones, tend not only to swear by worldly objects, such as the dear members of the family or other natural, social and cultural phenomena, more often than men do, but they also tend to use more elaborate linguistic formulas in swearing, e.g., the rhymed oaths, than men do. Their oaths seem to be more complimentary, human, and family-oriented. (2000: 228)

'Abd el-Jawād also notes that "older uneducated women...rarely swear by God" (2000: 227). According to Stewart, "[c]ognate curses are often used by parents or superiors towards children and subordinates. These cognate curses are used by women more than men and typically by

women of lower socio-economic status in traditional society" (344). Cognate curses, it should be noted, rarely invoke God. So, Arabic women do indeed curse; however, the curses they employ rarely invoke the Deity.

Emery has touched upon some of these gender differences in Omani Arabic, noting that older people, especially women, often use *ta'aqqabnā 'alaykum al-'āfiyyah* [May good health follow you], *darbak khadra* [may your path be green] and *qiddāish al-Rahmān* [Allāh, the Compassionate, is before you] while men appear to favor *hayyāk Allāh* [May Allāh give you life] and young women tend to employ the pan-Arabic *ma'a al-salāmah* as a closing exchange more than men (208). Congratulations at weddings appear to have gender differences, with religiously minded men given to using some variation of the phrase *dīn wa dunyā* [may your marriage be successful spiritually and materially] while younger men and women use the expression *mink al-māl wa minhā al-'ayyāl* [money from you and children from her] (210). When congratulating women on the birth of a baby, women tend to use sympathetic formulas and invocations such as *ahwan inshā' Allāh* [less pain, Allāh willing] and *khaṭirah wa salāmah inshā' Allāh* [danger, then safety, Allāh willing] while it is considered socially inappropriate for a man to congratulate the mother unless she is directly related to him (210). Invocations to ward off the evil eye such as *al-ṣalātu wa al-salām 'alā Muḥammad*, among others, pertain to the feminine domain. In the Dhahira region mainly older women use the expression *mū intū wa raḥma* with the root-echo response *Allāh yirḥam wālidīk* [May Allāh have mercy on your parents] whereas men tend to say *nī'imtū bi al-raḥmah* [blessings of rain]. The traditional Qur'ānic words of condolence *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn* [to Allāh we belong and to Him is our return] is used mainly by men who also refer to the inevitability of fate in the expression *hadhā mā qaddara Allāh* [this was decreed by Allāh]. In Morocco, expressions such as *msākum* [your afternoon] and *qata'at min fummak bi al-'asal* [I cut it from your mouth with honey] are used only by women (Davies 84). Evidently, more work needs to be done and any future research should be conducted by female scholars since, in Arabic-Islāmic culture, "[m]ale/female exchanges where participants are not related...tend to be very brief" (Emery 202) and women are generally inhibited around men. In light of these distinctions, there may be many linguistic forms which are only adequate for women and others only suitable for men.

We do know that some Allāh expressions are only appropriate for children, such as "May Allāh keep you" and that children have a different repertoire. We know that some Allāh phrases are meant for Muslims, such as "May Allāh forgive..." and others are meant for non-Muslims, like "May Allāh have mercy upon," as the Qur'ān prohibits asking forgiveness for non-Muslims. As Almighty Allāh explains, "It is not fitting, for the Prophet and those who believe, that they should pray for forgiveness for Pagans, even though they be of kin, after it is clear to them that they are companions of the Fire" (9:113). Although Abraham did pray for his polytheistic stepfather, saying "Forgive my father, for that he is among the astray" (26:86), he did so "only because of a promise he had made to him" (9:114).

¹⁹ Editor's Note: Ironically, Christian and Jewish Arabs call upon Allāh more frequently than non-Arabic-speaking Muslims do.

²⁰ Editor's Note: As Castleton has shown, the Allāh Lexicon does not transfer pragmatically and lexically into the English language when Arabic speakers switch to that language (2000b 5:3). For non-Arabic speakers, the implementation of Allāh expressions poses particular problems. Without understanding the contexts which call for the Allāh Lexicon, many English speaking Muslim converts use them erroneously and inappropriately. While a process of adaptation may be at play, if these individuals study the Arabic language and attempt to employ Allāh expression in Arabic in the same way they have done in English, they can make themselves the object of ridicule.

²¹ Editor's Note: The *basmalah* or *tasmiyyah* is the introductory "In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful" that precedes 113 of the 114 chapters of the Qur'ān.

²² Editor's Note: "The Arabic term *ism* shares with the Latin term *nomen* the grammatical meaning of 'noun' as well as the semantic meaning of 'name,' with the further ambiguity that 'noun' can also mean 'verbal noun' or 'adjective'" (Burrell and Daher 195, note 20).

²³ Editor's Note: On the one hand, there may be a secularizing tendency which aims at purging the written language of the press of the most common word in the Arabic language: the name of Almighty Allāh. On the other hand, there may be a culturally specific pattern at play which places elements of the Allāh Lexicon in very personal, intercommunicative venues, rather than second and third level media, an idea which is interesting but which requires further research to support it. The paradox here is not so much that the Allāh Lexicon phrases are missing from the press as the disparity between the language of the press and the language of the people. Hundreds of languages have died out due to edict, colonization and cultural imperialism. For the Allāh Lexicon to survive, and for religious and cultural values to survive, be preserved and prevail, it is not sufficient to remember Allāh and to mention His name merely in one's mind. If Muslims were to start saying *bismillāh* [In the name of Allāh], *alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to Allāh], *shukrulillāh* [Thanks be to Allāh], and so forth, in their heads, the name of Allāh would soon completely drop out of the spoken language. The Qur'ān dictates that the name of Allāh needs to be openly expressed, not suppressed. Allāh expressions repeatedly reinforce an Islāmic worldview, beliefs, ethics and morals.

²⁴ Editor's Note: Rabbinic Judaism prohibits mentioning the name of Yahweh. In order to refer to God, religious Jews recur to the names *Adonai* and *Elohim*, "Lord" and "God," and even these are used sparingly so as not to "use the name of God in vain." In fact, as Shmuel Bolosky explains, there is a tendency to say *ha-Shem* [the name], *adoshem*, or *Adonai*; in Israel one says *Amonai* while some Jews would say *Elokim* rather than *Elohim*. In Rabbinic literature, in their voice rather than quoting the Bible, the main Hebrew name for God appears to be *ha-kadosh baruch hu*, "the Holy One (blessed be He)." Although it is often abbreviated, Michael Carasik found 953 of these in the Babylonian Talmud alone. According to Rabbi Chaim Golberger from Keneseth Israel Congregation in Minneapolis, "Speaking the name of G-d in vain is a serious offense in Judaism, in that it invokes significant spiritual repercussions, but it is not a capital offense in that the Jewish court system can assess an earthly penalty." According to Michael Carasik, the real-world effect of the holiness of the Tetragrammaton results in treating any document that contains it in written form (like this book, for example) as something that is holy and cannot be destroyed. Hence, it is used most sparingly--generally only in copies of the Bible." As Rabbi Goldberger elaborates, "Where the Tetragrammaton is spelled out in print in Hebrew letters we do not permit destruction of the paper. Rather, we collect it for burial, in the same way we bury a Torah scroll no longer fit to be used."

²⁵ Editor's Note: This same phenomenon has been taking place in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India for many decades and is driven by Wahhābī/Salafī activists who claim that the use of *Khudā* is an "innovation" and thus "forbidden" in "Islām."

²⁶ Editor's Note: A study of spoken Urdu is certainly in order to see whether in fact it is only the written press that is lacking in the Allāh Lexicon or whether it is a reflection of the language as a whole.

²⁷ Editor's Note: Aḥmed Bashīr wonders whether this change is indicative of anti-Iranian or anti-Persian sentiment. Intīzār Ḥussain contextualizes this linguistic change:

In his time, Mawlanā Ghulam Aḥmad Pervaiz was very fond of using the term *ajamiyāt* [foreigners] in a derogatory way. In his hands, this term came to mean something anti-Islāmic, a term indicative of Iranian influence under which Islāmic concepts lost their purity. It gave birth to a rejectionist attitude towards Persian terms for Islāmic concepts and rituals. In Ziaul Ḥaqq's time, this trend won official approval... In fact, it was during this period that the idiomatic expression *Khudā Ḥāfiẓ* underwent an amendment. *Khudā Ḥāfiẓ* was replaced by *Allāh*. Recently, a Maulvi talking in a TV program was heard saying that the true Islāmic concept of one God is couched in the name of *Allāh*, not in *Khudā*.

²⁸ Editor's Note: One Persian writer, Jamālzādah, has described the linguistic situation in Iran as one in which Western-oriented persons use foreign words freely, the clergy refers to Arabic terms and the average Iranian struggles to understand both (Ārāsteh 50).

²⁹ Editor's Note: The sources we have relied upon reflect the Persian from Iran. The impression of Dr. Franklin Lewis, Assistant Professor in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at Emory University and President of American Institute for Iranian Studies, is that *Allāh* is more frequent in Dari Persian of Afghanistan than in Iranian Persian and that it is even less frequent in the Persian of Tajikistan. Whether this is indeed the case from a scientific standpoint remains to be explored.

³⁰ Editor's Note: The poet's extensive use of *Yazdān* was part of his attempt to "purify" the Persian language. The results for Firdowsī clearly demonstrate his preference for "pure" Persian, with 764 occurrences of *Yazdān*, 179 cases of *Khudāvand*, 4 cases of *Khudā* and 1 case of *Allāh*. Fascinatingly, the frequency of these words and their order reflects the order of their linguistic appearance. *Yazdān*, the most ancient of these words for God, is used intensively, *Khudāvand*, to a large extent, *Khudā*, occasionally, and *Allāh*, a single time. The same trend can be seen in the poetry of Nāṣir Khusraw.

³¹ The Fulbe people are called "Fulani" by Hausa and English speakers in Nigeria and the French call them "Peul." The Fulbe who live in the bush are called Mbororo. They all speak the same language called "Fulfulde." The singular of Fulbe is Pullo. The written form of the language, using Arabic script, is known as *ajamiya*.

³² Editor's Note: With the exception of the Arabs and the Fulbe, the degree of Islāmization in sub-Saharan Africa has generally been superficial. As J. Spence Trimingham notes, "Islām in Africa south of the Sahara was a very marginal region in relation to the wider Islāmic world" (1). As J.A.K. Leslie observed with regards to colonial Dar es Salam, "The vast majority of the population are Muslims, but many of these are really pagans in Muslim clothes" (qtd. in Trimingham 107). The superficiality of Islām among many black Africans was the very justification for the jihād of 'Usmān bī Fudī. As his son, Muḥammad Belo (d. 1837), described:

Islām was brought to this country [Bornu] by traders and travelers. Whoever wished adopted the faith; some practicing it as sincerely as they were able to, others mingling it with elements which nullified it. Such was the case with the majority of the kings of the country; they adopted Islām, confessed to the unity of God, observed ritual prayer and fast, yet never got rid of their inherited practices, nor abandoned one whit of their customs (qtd. in Trimingham 19).

As I.M. Lewis explains with regards to the Songhay Empire, of which the Zarma are descendants:

Islāmization...was restricted mainly to the ruling dynasties and chief administrators of the various kingdoms and, as one would expect, it was only the capital cities and other large centers where Islām had much effect, and even in these places its influence was

only partial. From al-Mahilī's "Replies" it is evident that the situation was much the same as situation 'Uthmān b. Fudī complained of in Hausaland four centuries later. Most so-called Muslims were half-hearted in their allegiance to Islām and, while making a lip-profession of faith, still believe in other gods whom they called upon in their shrines and at their sacred rocks and trees. Free women walked about unveiled except in Timbuktu...and in Jenne young girls customarily walked entirely naked until marriage...By the time of the Moroccan invasion in 1591 there seems to have been a marked relapse into paganism. (134)

While Paul Balta is correct in asserting that the Islām practiced in much of black Africa is "façonné par les traditions locales tells le culte de la nature et l'animisme" (84) [influenced by local tradition such as the cult of nature and animism], it should be recalled that there are many different levels of Islāmic participation in the continent from nominal Muslims who remain profoundly pagan, to deeply committed Muslims.

³³ Editor's Note: The Somali are among the earliest people to be converted to Islām, having embraced it in the ninth and tenth centuries. Since then, "Islām has been an integral part of their culture--to be Somali is to be Muslim" (Lullin 364). As I.M. Lewis has noted, "the Somali as a whole, and this should be emphasized, are highly orthodox and inclined to a fervent and deep attachment to their faith" (242). Despite their black African origin, and the fact that they speak a Cushitic language, Somalians are often identified as Arabs, so much so that Somalia is a member of the Arab League. Although its influence has diminished due to the official spread of Somalian, the Arabic language is still widely spoken in the country, particularly among those who are middle-aged and older. A study of these bilingual speakers would shed light on the transfer of the Arabic Allāh Lexicon into the Somali language.

³⁴ Editor's Note: The scientific accuracy of this study is in stark contrast to "opinions" and "impressions." In his article "Khodā Hafez versus Allāh Hafez: A critical inquiry" Mahfuzur Raḥmān claims that "In terms of its usage in everyday life, [*Khudā*]...is at least as common as *Allāh*, perhaps more so." In *Man in Society in Iran*, A. Reżā Ārāsteh claims that "Persians commonly use the expression *inshā' Allāh* [If God wills]" (42). Dr. Franklin Lewis' initial impression, which he admitted was unscientific, was that "Rumī's *Masnavī* consciously and successfully incorporates many verses of the Qur'ān in Persian meter, so it must be skewed toward Allāh--but it talks about the deity far more than *Vīs and Gurgan* does, which being a consciously pre-Islāmic milieu, would be skewed in the other direction, toward *Khudā*." As the reader will note in the Persian section of chapter one, this is not the case. During the course of our research we came across Pakistanis who claimed specifically that *Allāh* was the 15th most common word in Urdu and Persians who insisted that they used Allāh expressions as often as Arabs did, without any scientific proof to support their claims. When presented with the facts, many non-Arabs were defensive and often unwilling to accept the evidence.

³⁵ Editor's Note: As Intīzār Ḥussain explains, the sacred name *Khudā* "has undergone a long process at the hands of Muslim poets, thinkers and religious scholars, assimilating the devotional feelings and thoughts we associate with *Allāh*." As a result, "It has gained a status equivalent to that of *Allāh*, finding the same position in Muslim thought and the collective imagination of Muslim people."

³⁶ Editor's Note: As Benjamin Clark explains, Massignon "thought that Persian, like all of its Indo-European cousins, including French, was an idolatrous language, friendlier than Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic to paganism and the vanity of esthetes" (Massignon xxvii).

³⁷ Editor's Note: According to Hitti, who was Christian, Islām, in its original form, is "the logical perfection of Semitic religion" (1968: 5).

³⁸ Editor's Note: For more on paganism among the Jews see Nigosian's *Occultism in the Old Testament*. Some of the pre-Islāmic Arabs retained their ancient monotheistic faith and were known as the *ḥanīf* [The Rightly-Guided]. The Prophet Muḥammad and 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib never adored idols as they formed part of this *ḥanīf* tradition.

³⁹ Editor's Note: Almighty Allāh describes the Holy Qur'ān as "Arabic, pure and clear" (16: 103). As Elsayed M.H. Omran explains, "From the time of Sībawayh [765-96 CE] up to the present day there is hardly a page in any manual of Arabic grammar which does not contain one or more verses from the Qur'ān." There is no doubt that "the Qur'ān was instrumental in the codification of Arabic grammar in the second and the third Islāmic centuries." Omran, however, fails to mention that the first Arabic grammar was dictated by Imām 'Alī to Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī (Jordac 80). As George Jordac explains, "With his perfect knowledge of syntax, [his] eloquent tongue and great power of thinking," Imām 'Alī "formulated the rules and principles of correct Arabic" (80). This is further documented in M.A. al-Ḥusaynī (119) and Sayyed Ṣafdar Ḥusayn's *Histoire des premiers temps de l'Islam* (427-28) which draw from Major Jarret's translation of Suyūṭī's (d. 1505) *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'* or *History of the Caliphs* (183). As Muḥammad Ḥamīdullāh explains,

Il convient toutefois de mettre en garde ceux qui connaissent l'arabe et lisent le Coran dans l'original: qu'ils n'assujettissent pas le Coran aux avis, post-eventum, de Sībawaih et d'al-Aṣma'i; que, bien au contraire, les grammairiens post-coraniques se soumettent à l'usage du Saint Coran (xxiv).

[It is important to warn those who know Arabic and read the Qur'ān in its original language that they should not subject it to the *post-eventum* opinions of Sībawayh and al-Aṣma'i, but rather, post-Qur'ānic grammarians who submit to Qur'ānic usage.]

⁴⁰ Editor's Note: An argument can be made that a reliance on the Allāh Lexicon and its high frequency of use among Muslims aided in the spread of Islām by anchoring its focus so firmly on oral exhortation.

⁴¹ Editor's Note: As Seyyed Ḥossein Naṣr explains, "Wherever Islām went, it did not seek to level existing social structures to the ground, but to preserve and transform them as long as they did not oppose the spirit and form of the Islāmic revelation: the result was the creation of a single Islāmic identity" (2002: 88).

⁴² Editor's Note: In all fairness, we must admit that even the Arabs maintain pre-Islāmic customs and superstitions. The Berbers, however, are an exception in terms of language. On the basis of our interaction with Middle Atlas Berbers in Morocco, the Tamazight language appears to abound in religious invocations but with a preference for the word *Rabb* [Lord] as opposed to *Allāh*. The preference for *Rabb* over Allāh is also common among Arabic-speaking Jews and Christians. As most of the Amazigh people were Christians or Jews prior to embracing Islām, it may be that the use of "Lord" forms part of their pre-Islāmic cultural, religious and linguistic legacy. In Amazigh villages in Morocco, the typical greeting made to passersby is *Allāh y'awn* or "May Allāh help you."

⁴³ Editor's Note: According to Thomas J. Abercombie, "Hinduism and Buddhism color Islām in Indonesia... Indonesians wove local culture into the fabric of their new faith" (259).

⁴⁴ Editor's Note: For the combination of Black Nationalism and Islām, one need not look any further than Noble Drew 'Alī's Moorish Science Temple, Elijah Muḥammad and Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islām, the 5% Nation of Islām, the Anṣār Allāh and other similar sects which speak for less than 1% of the 2.5 million African American Muslims. The followers of Elijah Muḥammad and Louis Farrakhan are outside of the fold of Islām for, as the "Muslim

Program” explains on their web site and their publications, they “believe that Allāh (God) appeared in the Person of Master W. Fard Muḥammad, in July 1930; the long-awaited “Messiah” of the Christians and the “Maḥdī” of the Muslims.” The NOI believes that Master W. Fard Muḥammad was Allāh and that Elijah Muḥammad was his Final Messenger. This is whom they refer to when they say “There is no God but Allāh and Muḥammad is His Messenger.” The belief in *ḥulūl* [incarnation] is the antithesis of *tawḥīd* [oneness of God] and the belief in a prophet after Muḥammad is clearly inconsistent with the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*. The NOI believes in racial separation and that “intermarriage or race mixing should be prohibited” while Islām has abolished racism (49:13: 4:1; 2:213; 6:98; 7:189; 21:92; 23:52). As the Prophet said in his Farewell Sermon, “All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over a white - except by piety and good action” (Muslim, Aḥmad, Dārimī, Ibn Mājah, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Ḥibbān et al.). The NOI believes “in the resurrection of the dead—not in physical resurrection—but in mental resurrection” while Islām believes in physical resurrection. The NOI believes that black people “are the people of God’s choice” while Islām does not believe in Chosen People. In short, the Nation of Islām has little in common with Islām besides its name. Claude Andrew Clegg is thus in error when he claims that “[i]n regards to traditional or orthodox Islām, the Nation of Islām was heterodox in many of its views and practices; however, it was arguably a legitimate Muslim sect given its marginal adherence to central tenets of the Islāmic faith.” (68). He adds that “[o]verall, the basic outlines of both religious traditions do appear to overlap enough to allow the black organization to reasonably claim membership in the body of Islām, albeit as a heretical limb” (69). The Nation of Islām cannot be heterodox, a legitimate Muslim sect, a member in the body of Islām and a heretical limb at the same time. It should be noted that Warith Deen Muḥammad’s Muslim American Society, though originally nationalistic in nature, is Sunnī in orientation and part of mainstream American Islām.

⁴⁵ Editor’s Note: In one *ḥadīth*, Imām Ja’far al-Šādiq (d. 765-66) purportedly criticizes the superficial conversions to Islām of Sindīs, Zinjīs, Khūzistānīs, Kurds, Berbers and Rāzīs, all of whom share the dubious distinction of not having the sweetness of belief enter their hearts (Ibn Bābawayhī 321).

⁴⁶ Editor’s Note: Throughout this book, we have generally avoided the use of the term “formula,” which, in English, has a meaning that somehow diminishes the process and removes levels of sincerity and emotion. Consequently, we have opted for terms such as: “expression,” “phrase,” “pattern,” “honorific,” and so forth. As Castleton explains in regard to Allāh expressions, “it would be a mistake to assume that...their use is strictly ritualistic, without form or function” (2000b 5:2). Recognizing that Allāh phrases are not merely formulas, Eirllys Davies finds it preferable to recognize a continuum with expressions possessing various degrees of fixedness in between the entirely invariable and conventional and the entirely original (75). While there is truth in Nelson’s claim that since they exist as formulaic chunks of discourse, “[t]he potential for varying the formulas is minimal” (417), this applies only to formulaic Allāh expressions and not Allāh expressions as a whole. The name Allāh, it should be remembered, can be followed by virtually any Arabic verb to express a specific sense: Allāh loves, Allāh gives, Allāh guides, Allāh helps, Allāh heals...leaving the speaker with a virtually inexhaustible repertoire of possibilities.

⁴⁷ Editor’s Note: Allāh phrases, however, are quite different. As Castleton explains,

Alḥamdulillāh, as a culturally appropriate response to *kayf ḥālīk* [How are you?—Egypt], *Labās* [How are you?—Morocco], *Shlonak* [How are you?—Kuwait], may appear to be as ritualistic as the phrase, “Fine thanks, and you?” offered in English to the same salute, yet *alḥamdulillāh* functions in dozens of other circumstances as well, many of which are also frequent episodes. (2000b 5.1)

⁴⁸ Editor's Note: Like Masliyah, we do recognize that oaths such as *wa Allāh*, *wa Allāhi* and *bi Allāhi* also have secularized uses in everyday speech where they are utilized as dummy words, as entreating and conjuring words, as a preliminary to further speech with the sense of "well..." as well as to express emotion or surprise (1999: 97-98). Mentioning God in such circumstances is much like saying "Ah, God" in English when one is not happy about something, "God Almighty" upon surprise, and "God damn it" when one hurts oneself. In these instances, the speaker is not sincerely calling upon God. The speaker is not seriously invoking God's help or wrath. However, when an English speaking person says "God bless you" to someone who has done a great favor, the intent is evident. The same applies with Arabic. A *Wa Allāhi* here and there may be said without consciously contemplating the Creator. Clear invocations, supplications, prayers and calls for blessings from Almighty Allāh, however, call for a higher degree of consciousness. While some Allāh phrases are not necessarily used for religious reasons, these secularized sayings form a small segment of the Allāh Lexicon, the vast majority of which are Islāmic in nature: oaths containing God's beautiful names and attributes, Qu'rānic expressions and reference to God, oaths involving the Prophet, Imāms, saints and other venerated personalities, oaths and invocations involving the Qu'rān and non-scriptural oaths expressing veneration of God.

⁴⁹ Editor's Note: Davies claims that "it is not necessarily the case that any Moroccan who uses the formula *Allāh y'awn* has its religious significance uppermost in mind, any more than English speakers are likely to be conscious of the originally religious reference in 'goodbye' every time they utter it" (81). Although the religious significance of the expression may not be uppermost in mind, it still remains in mind as its Islāmic nature is explicit. This cannot be said of the English "Goodbye" as few English-speakers are even aware that it is an abbreviation of "God be with you," just like the Spanish *Adiós* is a contraction of *Anda con Dios* or "Go with God." Most Muslims, regardless of how religious or learned they are, can identify the main expressions from the Allāh Lexicon as being derived from the Holy Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Whether they mean it or not, whether they are consciously thinking about it or not, whether they are sincere or not, is really not the issue. The issue is that they use these expressions because they are religiously required forms of courtesy. They are Muslims in the literal sense of submitting to God and in the linguistic sense of submitting to the Islāmic dictates governing their language. This view is in accord with the most widely recognized Arabic dictionaries: *Lisān al-'arab*, *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ* and *al-Mu'jam al-wasīf*, which define complimenting as treating someone with courtesy but not necessarily with sincerity.

⁵⁰ Editor's Note: As Davies explains, "[f]ormulas may be restricted with regard to the kind of speaker who may use them, the kind of addressee to whom they may be used, the medium [speech or writing] through which they may be expressed, and various aspects of the setting in which they are used" (84).

⁵¹ Editor's Note: Christian Arabs do swear by Allāh and His Properties, but not necessarily by His Most Beautiful Names, most often preferring to use *al-Rabb*, the Lord ('Abd el-Jawād, 2000: 228)

⁵² Editor's Note: To demonstrate our point, it is worthwhile to translate a brief encounter we observed between an Iraqi woman and a Moroccan woman at a Wal-Mart in Kansas City on February 15, 2004, and which is reflective and representative of ordinary Arabic speech which is so saturated with invocations to God, prayers, and blessings:

Moroccan:	May Peace be upon you!
Iraqi:	May the peace, blessings and mercy of Allāh be upon you!
Moroccan:	How are you?
Iraqi:	I am well, praise be to Allāh. And how are you?
Moroccan:	Praise to Allāh!
Iraqi:	Is this your son?

Moroccan:	Yes, praise and thanks be to Allāh
Iraqi:	There is no god but Allāh and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh. May Allāh shower blessings on Muḥammad! Please be our guests.
Moroccan:	May Allāh bless you but we are pressed for time.
Iraqi:	And may Allāh bless you as well.
Moroccan:	Go in peace.
Iraqi:	May Allāh give you peace.

⁵³ Editor's Note: Religious reasons aside, the form of the Arabic language may play a part in the frequency of formulaic exchanges (Coulmas 11). By the same token, "it may be that the ubiquitous root-echo response in Arabic is facilitated by the morphological structure of the language, specifically the ease with which verbs and nouns are derived by means of lexical roots" (Emery 197). It should also be recalled that Arabic literature, both ancient and modern, makes frequent use of the semantic device of "tracing," a literary reliance on repetition for the purpose of dramatic interest, typically applying to facts, actions, songs and words which form a leitmotif (Aspel 187). The frequent use of Qu'rānic verses in the Allāh Lexicon may also be attributable to the fact that they are concise and emphasize moral rules and precepts, acting much the same way as proverbs do as models of thrift. In fact, many Arab proverbs invoke Allāh and are thus part and parcel of the Allāh Lexicon.

⁵⁴ Editor's Note: It is conceivable that a politeness expression from the Arabic Allāh Lexicon may supplant or alter a pre-Islāmic politeness phrase from another language. For example, there are many cases of expressions which are a mixture of the Arabic Allāh Lexicon with other languages, such as *Khudā Hāfiz*, with *Khudā*, God, in Persian, and *Hāfiz*, the Protector and the Preserver in Arabic; and other similar cases in Malaysian and Fulani. Where politeness expressions existed, the Allāh Lexicon may have modified them. However, not all languages have politeness expressions. This may account for the relatively low frequency of Allāh expressions in East Indian languages which have few, if any, indigenous expressions of courtesy, and the ones they have, like *shukriya*, are borrowed from Arabic. This is not to mean that East Indians are rude, although they are sometimes perceived as such by Westerners. They are actually very kind and hospitable people concerned with sincerity. In Pakistan, for example, people do not say "thanks" for trivial matters. They thank people when they have gone out of their way to do something.

⁵⁵ Editor's Note: The suppression of the Allāh Lexicon has been documented by Castleton (2000b 5:3).

⁵⁶ Editor's Note: See Castleton's "Arabic and the Allāh Lexicon: The Loss of Culture in Second Language Acquisition" (2000c). El-Sayed has also pointed out this problem and concludes that "the poor performance of Arab learners in rendering correct politeness formulas warrants the need for such functions [as expressing politeness] to be introduced into curricula of English as a foreign language" (21). He also feels that Arabic speakers who study English should not be expected to accept English formulas as they are and that EFL/ESL teachers "should empirically validate a set of English formulas that are not ethnocentric and that Arab learners can manage and accept" (13). As he explains, "There is indeed no reason why anyone, because he speaks English, should not follow his own cultural traditions. It would be a very limited view to expect the foreigner [in our case the Arab learner] to forget his identity the moment he speaks English" (13).

⁵⁷ Editor's Note: As a result, "language learners should be exposed to oaths for them to develop their global sociopragmatic competence in the target language" (Sāliḥ and 'Abdul-Fattāḥ 113).

⁵⁸ Editor's Note: The Arabs belong to a language family, not a single race. They are made up of a multitude of different races and are united by language, culture and history. They are heterogeneous not homogeneous. As Clovis Maqṣūd explains, "An Arab is the one whose

'destiny' is either by force of circumstances or intentionally bound to the Arab world as a whole... whoever is descended from Kurdish, Negro or Armenian stock but has inhabited an Arab country, becomes an Arab by force of circumstances and by reason of the free association of his own destiny with that of the Arab world" (qtd. in Laffin 27). According to H.A.R. Gibb, "All those are Arabs for whom the central fact of history is the mission of Muḥammad and the memory of the Arab empire and who in addition cherish the Arabic tongue and its cultural heritage as their common possession" (Laffin 27). One of the reasons that Arabic was so readily adopted by non-Arabic-speaking people like the Amazigh was that it was viewed as a religious language, carrier of civilization and science, as opposed to the language of a given race. As Algerian President Chadli recognized, "la langue arabe a acquis un contenu dénué de toute oppression de nature raciale" (qtd. Balta 133) ["the content of the Arabic language is devoid of racism"].

⁵⁹ Editor's Note: As Castleton explains, "[t]hose who are directly connected to Arabic have absorbed a repertoire of divine sentiment into their daily speech, assigning *Allāh* influence over every area of their lives" (2000b).

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Chapter 2

Frequency and Function of Religiously-Based Expressions

By Barbara Castleton

1. Introduction

Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar, [Allāh is the Greatest, Allāh is the Greatest] are the first two lines of the ancient call to prayer chanted by Muslim muezzins from mosques throughout the Arab and non-Arab world. The hearing of these phrases alone brings hundreds of millions of Muslims to their prayer rugs five times per day and “orient[s] them toward a black cube” (King 1). The black cube is Makkah’s Ka’bah, the symbol and heart of the Islāmic religion. It is also the focal point for all those billions of prayers. In mosques and homes around the globe, Muslims of every color respond to the call to prayer willingly and gratefully, preparing for their devotionals by washing their faces, hands and feet. Five times a day, Islām offers an interlude during which Muslims everywhere call on and honor their Maker. From Asia, to Africa, from Europe, to the American Midwest, the call to prayer “brings humanity together, no matter what nationality” (King 1).

Islām, derived from an Arabic word meaning “submission,” is the dominant religion of the Arabic-speaking world. Hundreds of years of seafaring, conquests, and movement along ancient trade routes have taken Islām far from its source in the deserts of the Middle East to ports, metropolises, and villages around the world. Currently nearly twenty percent of the world’s population makes obeisance toward Makkah while praying to Allāh.

The concept of submission guides and underlies all expression within the Islāmic faith. At the core resides the certitude that Allāh is All-Powerful and All-Knowing. This truth drives Muslim prayers and supports their daily lives. This

conviction is manifested in over one hundred names and titles for Allāh, from the Greatest [*al-Kabīr*], to the Most Merciful [*al-Raḥīm*], and on to the Most Compassionate [*al-Raḥmān*]. Within these names and embedded in their use is a belief that Allāh deserves intense and frequently expressed acknowledgement along with appropriate honorifics.

Islām's reverential obligation has given rise to an intriguing language device which we have termed the Allāh Lexicon (Castleton 2000). Currently employed by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, the Allāh Lexicon originated concurrently with the emergence of Islām itself. Indeed, it is within the holy book of Islām, the Qur'ān [which in English translates as "recitation"], that we find the first example of the Allāh Lexicon. In Chapter 18, entitled *al-Kahf* [The Cave], verses 23-24 adjure all followers: "Nor say of anything, 'I shall be sure to do so and so tomorrow'--Without adding, 'If Allāh wills' [*inshā' Allāh*] and call thy Lord to mind when thou forgettest, and say, 'I hope that my Lord will guide me ever closer [even] than this to the right road'" (18:23-24).

This dictum, with its reminder to utter *inshā' Allāh*, meaning "If Allāh wills it" or "So please Allāh," asks true believers to view all events in terms of a recognition of Allāh's will and influence. *Inshā' Allāh*, possibly the most widely known phrase from the Allāh Lexicon outside the Arabic-speaking world, is so prominent within Arabic--in terms of plans, dreams and hopes--that it has come to be perceived by some as a *de facto* future marker in the language, at least so far as conditional situations are concerned. Within the geographic realms of the Arabic language, any future possibility must be tempered with the use of *inshā' Allāh*. In speech and in practice, it has acted as a compelling impetus for the creation and spread of the multitude of other utterances that augmented the Allāh Lexicon. In addition, due to the singularity of their use in Arabic, a selection of these single words or phrases has become marked elements of pragmatically driven expression. Two examples are *bismillāh*, [In the name of Allāh] whis is spoken before a meal and *alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to Allāh] which is spoken after its completion. Part prayer, part rigorous adherence to religiously-based pronouncements, these phrases have hundreds of offspring which are linguistic

2.3 Specialized Language

From a research perspective, the use of the Allāh Lexicon demands that the observer and the listener step beyond the syntax, semantics and even the phonology of the Arabic language and look instead, as Levinson suggested, at “specific phenomena that can only naturally be described by recourse to contextual concepts” (475). Though they may differ on specifics, Stephen Levinson’s comment paralleled Jacob Mey’s doctrine, which held that pragmatics must connect the speaker with the intent of the spoken word, and in order to do so must necessarily look at who the user is (5). According to Mey, the user of a language has an entire realm of individualized context as well as the community’s culture to buttress each utterance. Due to the specific nature of individual context and profound pragmatic understanding, non-native speakers of a language are forever at a disadvantage in regard to an absolute grasp of a language they may be translating and interpreting. James Joyce, too, recognized this connection between person and language in his novel *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* when he wrote:

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words *home, Christ, ale, master*, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadows of his language. (172)

The singular bonding of man to language was the impetus for an analysis of pragmatic boundaries in relation to the Allāh Lexicon. These extended into socio-cultural arenas inherent in the Arabic language and the lexicon’s evolution specifically as regards the attitudinal changes which took place with the advent of Islām. As a discourse tool, the Allāh Lexicon is a collection of Arabic exhortations, proverbs, wise sayings, formulae, quasi-content phrases and quotations directly from the Qur’ān which cover an array of pragmatic and functional domains: courtesy, caution, comfort, gratitude, honorifics or another of Allāh’s names, respect, planning, and transactions (Blum-Kulka, Kaspar & House

2.2 In the News

Arabic words and phrases like *inshā' Allāh* [Allāh willing], *alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to Allāh] or *Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is the Greatest] have recently penetrated the American consciousness, particularly in response to the scandal about abuse of the Qur'ān at Guantánamo Bay, the tragedy of September 11, 2001, and previous episodes such as the fatal crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 off the eastern coast of the United States on October 31, 1999 (National Transportation and Safety Board, 2002). During these and other occurrences, there emerged intense speculation about the treatment of holy objects, the underlying agenda ascribed to the Islāmic religion, and the real meaning of selected Allāh phrases. A component of the Allāh Lexicon was uttered by the co-pilot of EgyptAir Flight 990 shortly before the crash. The phrase in question, *tawakkaltu 'alā Allāh* [I put myself in Allāh's hands], was interpreted by Western investigators to mean the pilot intended to purposefully crash the plane into the ocean. Arabic linguists, the pilot's family, and native Arabic speakers disagreed, stating that the phrase is commonly used before a journey, an important endeavor or, in the case of transactional use, in the marketplace where the words form a specialized code in bargaining dialogues. That a simple grouping of words could raise such furor and be debated in judicial, aeronautical, and linguistic halls around the world speaks to the requisite nature of a better understanding of the Allāh Lexicon. So vital are these phrases to an understanding of Arabic and Islāmic culture that they have been offered as one topic of study in FBI training courses (van Naerssen).

Although Allāh phrases have existed in the Arabic language for more than fourteen centuries, thriving in their use as pragmatic vehicles of purpose, emotion, content and information, no research exists which investigates their group function or categorization as a single language feature. For this study, a range of Allāh phrases was first classified under the title Allāh Lexicon, thereby acknowledging their collective nature and intent. Next, an introductory analysis of the category in terms of breadth, pragmatic use, frequency and function was conducted.

2.3 Specialized Language

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1989). How these phrases--so familiar to native Arabic speakers--actually function in that language forms the foundation for this initial study.

3. The Allāh Lexicon

The Allāh Lexicon is a language feature specific to Arabic and one that is utilized extensively in the performance of everyday discourse, both written and verbal, in that language. Consisting of thousands of phrases, of which a selection is used here as examples, the Allāh Lexicon derives from reflections on and responses to Allāh's influence over every aspect of human life and the universe. The varied adaptation of this language feature is an exceptionally intriguing view of the lyrical and habitual use of imagery, quotations, and referential remarks within the oral and linguistic history of Arabic itself. Long before Arabic was a written language, and while its speakers were largely tribal and nomadic, language development and talents were one currency of respect and recognition. This virtuosity in producing lyrical speech and evocative poetry was evident in the language even before Muḥammad was chosen by Allāh to be the messenger of His teachings. So prized were words in the pre-Islāmic Middle East that well constructed and creatively delivered poetry was often hung for public viewing and comment along the towering sides of the Ka'bah in Makkah. The monument, though said to be erected by Abraham, and allegedly tracing its history to the time of Adam, had long become a center of polytheistic worship, until it regained its monotheistic mandate becoming the sacred center of Islām. For many centuries before Islām, during the time known as the Jahiliyyah, the creative weaving of words led to renowned contests and even conflict (Conelly 14). So magical were the lines of story tellers and poets that the Arabic language came to be commonly described as "a string of pearls."

In other studies of phrases common in Arabic, Sheila Webster noted a series of word groupings in regular use both before and after the advent of Islām. In the shadow of the historically acknowledged propensity of Arabic speakers to insert streams of poetic verse, witty or wise sayings and other creative expressions in normal speech and conversation, she made a study of the Islāmic *ḥadīth*, the *ḥikmah*, the *mathal*, and finally, the *qā'idah*. The Islāmic *aḥādīth* forms a vast

repertoire of sayings attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad standing in his role of one who communicates Allāh's laws and lessons. The *ḥikmah* represents a pre and post-Islāmic selection of sayings that were based on accepted and profound wisdom. The *amthāl* or proverbs are lesson-bearing phrases related to the authority of cultural tradition while the *qā'idah*, meaning "the base" or basic principles, are axioms that may parallel the *amthāl* to a certain degree but are not interchangeable. Allāh Lexicon phrases, whether simply by naming Allāh, calling on Him for assistance, or describing His deeds and potentialities, may be found as a feature in each of these areas. These include the proverbs, "The hand of Allāh is with the group" (Tirmidhī 2167) and "Allāh gives, Allāh takes, and Allāh returns that which is lost," as well as traditions which cite Allāh expressions used by the Prophet such as *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh* [There is neither might nor power except Allāh] (586).

Given the breadth of variety within the Allāh Lexicon, it is not surprising that for an infinite list of life events, any number of appropriate phrases from the lexicon may be used. Some Arabic-speaking cultures may favor the use of one over another in a particular venue, but all cultures employ the lexicon throughout normal discourse.¹ As a direct result of the deep connection they feel to their religion and creator, native Arabic-speaking Muslims look at the events of daily life not only in terms of their reality--a dinner, a tragedy, a planned vacation, a meeting on the street, a research project, a thank you or an offer of sympathy, as well as greetings and farewells--but also in terms of God's relationship to that event or interaction. So distinct is this connection between the language, the religion, and the people, and so particular the pragmatic understanding of the users, that researchers of ancient texts could determine, largely by analyzing the use of Allāh Lexicon phrases, whether the writer of a discovered text was Muslim or not:

We have surveyed several alchemical treatises written by Latin authors and other treatises translated from Arabic during the twelfth and later centuries. *We looked into the word "God" and the other words signifying God and the descriptions attached to them and we found that the qualities attributed to God by Muslim alchemists are not used by the Latin writers.*

In other words, we can distinguish a Latin author from an Islāmic one by observing in what manner the word “God” occurs. (al-Ḥassan) [Italics ours]

Non-Muslims have also come to regularly use the Allāh Lexicon in recognition of its status as a cultural component of life in the Arabic world and within the Arabic language.² Such adaptation occurs naturally, since the vast majority of native Arabic speakers, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, are typically monotheistic and, as such, find no conflict in using phrases extolling or referring to God. Even visitors to areas of North Africa, the Levant, and the Middle East are not immune from the dominion of the Allāh Lexicon: “You live here as a guest. Soon you learn to think like others, and find yourself, even in your most private moments, saying *inshā’ Allāh*” (Langewiesche 43).³

4. Relationship to Culture

Based on the aforementioned information, the Allāh Lexicon resides not only in speech throughout the Arabic-speaking world but in the tangible features of life there as well:

1. On flags, such as the flag of Saudi Arabia and Iraq;
2. On government stationery where flowing Arabic script noting *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* [In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful] is spread across the cover sheet;
3. In song--from classical performers like Egypt’s Umm Kulthūm, to popular new stars such as Moroccan Sa‘īdah Fiqrī;
4. On radio and television broadcasts;
5. In literature, where *inshā’ Allāh* [If Allāh wills], *māshā’ Allāh* [As Allāh wills], *Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is the Greatest] and other phrases are frequent refrains in ancient works, like *Alf laylah wa laylah* [The Arabian Nights] as translated by Sir Richard Burton and more contemporary writings, such as *The First Man* by Albert Camus.

The fables of *Alf laylah wa laylah* are notable because the introductory paragraphs in Burton's translation indicate that the tales themselves are intended to reveal the wisdom of Allāh's words:

The Arabian Nights Entertainments [*Alf laylah wa laylah*]

Story of King Shahrayar and his brother

In the name of Allāh, the Compassionating, the Compassionate!

Praise be to Allāh, the Beneficent King, the Creator of the Universe, Lord of the Three Worlds, Who set up the Firmament without pillars in its stead and who stretched out the earth even as a bed, and grace, and prayer, blessing be upon our Lord Muḥammad, Lord of Apostolic Men... Verily the works and words of those gone before us have become instances and examples to men of our modern day, that folk may view what admonishing chances befell other folk and may therefrom take warning; and that they may peruse the annals of antique peoples and all that hath betided them, and be thereby ruled and restrained. Praise, therefore, be to Him who hath made the histories of the past an admonition unto the present! Now of such instances are the tales called *A Thousand Nights and a Night*, together with their far-famed legends and wonders. (Burton 1850)

6. In ancient medeval texts where *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* [In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful] is found on the illuminated copies of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Qānūn fī al-ṭibb* which were inscribed by Timurid artisans of the 15th century;
7. In Ibn Sīnā's treatise on love, *Risālah fī al-'ishq*, he offers the essay, "In the name of the All-Merciful God."
8. In congratulatory announcements for weddings and births;
9. In interviews with heads of state (King Moḥammed VI);
10. In internet emails where phrases such as *Allāhu a'lam* or Allāh knows better, have been drawn forth from the Golden Age. (Darrat)

More whimsically, words and phrases from the Allāh Lexicon have been appropriated by the youth culture, wherein rock bands have taken the name *Inshā' Allāh*, a character in a fantasy games is likewise called *Inshā' Allāh*; *Inshā' Allāh* is also the name of a performance and art gallery in Los Angeles, California⁴. An online gay and lesbian community in Germany has determined that their philosophy blends well with the name *Māshallāh*, "with Allāh's will." The same term, *Māshallāh*, is the title and primary chant in a poem by James Burgess

(2004). As widespread as these examples seem to be, and given the acceptance they appear to have gained in non-Arab, non-Muslim cultures, there is no direct link to their use in these venues and the same phrases' use in Arabic or as a manifestation of Islāmic linguistic culture.

5. Discussion

While no research looks specifically at the entire body of items in the Allāh Lexicon, several studies have included investigations which either classified some of its components according to use or in relation to identity and culture. El-Sayed described the use of several examples of the Allāh Lexicon in an article which focused on politeness formulas such as those used in the process of thanking or offering sympathy or sharing news. Examples of these from Egypt are:

Thanking	<i>bārakallāhufik</i>	"May Allāh bless you"
Condolence	<i>al-bārakaḥfik</i>	"May blessing be upon you"
Sharing news	<i>khīr inshā' Allāh</i>	"Goodness if Allāh wills"
(El-Sayed 5, 9, 20)		

In his research on "congratulations" and "thank you" announcements in Jordanian newspapers, Maḥmūd al-Khaṭīb looked into the relationship between "language and social life" (156). He found that persons placing the announcements made repeated use of phrases from the Allāh Lexicon. He determined that the phrasing in the announcements followed specific patterns that were neither spontaneous nor arbitrary. Invocations to Allāh and/or thanks for his munificence are noticeably present in this modern communicative format:

There are forty-three invocations [in 122 announcement samples] in both types of announcements, all of which call upon Allāh to bless and help the addressee achieve more success and progress in his work and future life. An example is: *waffaḥaka Allāh likhidmati ummatik, wa waṭānik, wa malikik* [God] help you serve the nation, country and the king]. (1997: 164)

Likewise, Deborah Kapchan, in her book detailing the language of women in Morocco, observed the use of the lexicon in several significant venues of a woman's life. In describing one of those arenas, Kapchan focused on the marketplace patter of herbalists and spiritual healers, for whom the Allāh Lexicon serves as a fertile source for *du'ā'* [plural, *da'awāt*], a formal plea for either blessing or misfortune (79). *Da'awāt* are utilized by both herbalists and *majdūbāt*, or healers, to establish a "high moral tone" within the framework of *sūq* [market] capitalism. Like their male counterparts, these women thread phrase after phrase from the Allāh Lexicon throughout discussions of product, purpose and efficacy, all in a manner designed to draw and capture a crowd. This canny ploy works wonders since few Muslims, once finding themselves part of a seller's circle, are willing to turn away from exhortations declaring that, "There's no might or power except with God, the High, the Great" (79). So it is that a Machiavellian combination of familiar religious phrases and salesmanship characterizes the use of the Allāh Lexicon in Morocco's markets.

6. Language and Personae

Anna Wierzbicka's studies have investigated what Raymond Williams has called key words, groups of words so essential to a specific language that their distinctions may be non-existent in another tongue. These words are a part of the culture, binding what is generally thought of in terms of music, costumes, and art, within the realm of thought and speech. "It may seem obvious that words with special, culture-specific meanings reflect and pass on not only ways of living characteristic of a given society but also ways of thinking" (5).

The question is not whether other languages, including English, may have a selection of similar religiously based phrases, but rather how the pragmatics implanted in Allāh expressions are also the basis of their dependence on these lexical units as an essential feature of discourse.⁵ Ronald Wardhaugh concurs, describing how the relationship of a language to its speakers creates a connection which is so profound as to defy separation. Indeed, he comments, "it is difficult to explain how individual speakers acquire knowledge of these norms of linguistic behavior, for they appear to be much more subtle than [o]the[r] norms, supporting

the extended arena of pragmatic knowledge governing features of language” (6). For support of this concept, we can look at both Willam Labov and Penelope Eckert, whose ethnographic studies on linguistic variation focused on situations where target populations met specific sociological goals through the use of language variation (1963; 1996). In the case of Labov’s Martha’s Vineyard study, he found a distinctive vowel variant among the year-round residence and theorized that the intent of this marked use was community solidarity. Consciously or unconsciously, the permanent residents desired a linguistic signal to differentiate themselves from the island’s hordes of summer visitors. Eckert, in her study of adolescent groups, found specific linguistic variations which identified the speaker as a member of one group over another.

Thus, it is not surprising to find that native speakers of Arabic are driven by realized or unrealized goals to acknowledge deep ties to Islām and Allāh through their speech as well. In the case of the Allāh Lexicon, a pertinent set of goals seems evident: 1) an inbred need to respond to the oft-repeated mandate within Islām’s holy book to use such expressions as a measure of devotion, 2) an omnipresent and personal identification with a closely-held religion, 3) a desire to retain and display features of a conspicuously Arab identity, and 4) close ties to specific language-based cultural elements of their individual homeland, wherein the use of the lexicon may vary from region to region and country to country based on the idiosyncratic cultural modifications present in different locations.

7. Additional Areas of Use

The Allāh Lexicon consists of what may be thought of primarily as religious idioms or phrases. However, it would be a mistake to assume that these linguistic units are only used in the context of religion or that their use is strictly ritualistic, without form or function. The core meaning of these phrases is in their illocutionary and perlocutionary expression, where the speaker may not offer new information, but rather expresses a meaning-driven sentiment. As Glen Pettigrove explains, “[o]ne way to distinguish illocutionary from perlocutionary acts attends to the difference between what we do *in* saying something and what we do *by* saying something” [*italics mine*] (371-72). The actual lexical items may not

reflect content or intent (Austin 99-100).

Correlative to *inshā' Allāh*, the rest of the Allāh Lexicon reflects a similar permeating pragmatic reality. In addition to denoting religiously dictated interjections, the Allāh Lexicon sustains critical linguistic and noticeable performance venues within the Arabic language.⁶ In Arabic, the discharging of many speech acts and language functions will be seen to require the use of phrases from this lexicon. *Inshā' Allāh* is but one example of this. Planning, for example, is a recognized speech function, one that often employs the use of “will”, “going to”, “plan”, and “intend to”, as indicators of purpose. These verb signals exist in Arabic as well, and in the Arabic as a second language classroom, they may be the only requisite cues for plans and goals. This is not the case in the speech of native Arabic speakers. While the verb forms identified are critical, they are rarely used alone. Within the culture of the Qur'ān and for believers in Islām, the speech function of planning and goals setting must be accompanied by *inshā' Allāh*.

Begging functions, or asking someone to do a favor, are likewise invariably accompanied by a component of the Allāh Lexicon. Anything less would be considered rude. When asking for money, proto-typical beggars will hold out their hand, tilt their head to a plaintive angle and say *Allāh yarḥam al-wālidīn* or *Allāh yaḥfadh*. The use of these phrases in this situation, along with the hand gesture, constitutes an implicit request for money. Another phrase that might be used for requests and begging is *'afāk*. The complete form would be *'afāk Allāh* [May Allāh give you health]; although, the *Allāh* may be understood rather than stated. Whatever phrase is used, the extended hand and the expression are required to fulfil the request function. This is not dissimilar to the familiar occurrence of a mother telling her child to say “Please” when making a request. In maternal culture, the “Please” is a necessary linguistic partner to the request. It must be mentioned that while the lexicon's consequence seems overwhelmingly pragmatic in nature, an initial analysis of function in use demonstrates recognized linguistic criteria.

The work of Yule provides a basis for observing the functional use of the lexicon. His categorization of two specific functions can be applied broadly in this regard. He describes both transactional and interactional functions. The first dialogue below, a transactional discourse, describes how speech choices pass on knowledge, skills and information. In contrast, an interactional function relates to the way people behave and show pleasure, pain, friendliness, and intimacy. The Allāh Lexicon evinces examples of both in daily dialogue.

Transactional

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the Allāh Lexicon is its ability to manifest transactional function within the pragmatic characteristics of knowing what to say and when to say it that are embodied in conversations such as the one detailed below, overheard in a vegetable *sūq* [market] in Settāt, Morocco. At the core of this discourse form is the cognizance of both speakers of a rooted cultural tradition: “In these relationships, the intent of the other person can be taken for granted as the speech is played out against a backdrop of common assumption, common history, [and] common interest” (Bernstein 165, 192). These speakers, in a linguistic dance that they know and perform frequently, have no doubt as to the actual meaning of the phrases used, despite the culture-specific encoding. Thus, they are able to complete a transaction without the constant use of traditional morphemes.

Buyers and Sellers

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Buyer: | <i>Kam al-baṭāṭā?</i> “How much are the potatoes?” |
| Seller: | <i>Twakkal ‘alā Allāh.</i> “You put your faith in Allāh.”
[Meaning: “Offer me a price.”] |
| Buyer: | <i>Dirhamein b’kilo.</i> “Two dirhams a kilo.” |
| Seller: | <i>Allāh yjīb rās al-māl.</i> “May Allāh bring my expenses.”
[Meaning: “At this price, I can’t recoup my cost.”] |
| Buyer: | <i>Allāh yahdīk. Allāh yaj’al al-bāraka.</i> “May Allāh direct you, Allāh provides enough.”
[Meaning: “Oh, come on, Allāh provides.”] |
| Seller: | <i>Allāh yahdina kāmīn, wa lakīn, wallāh ma wasalt ḥta rās al-māl.</i>
“May Allāh direct us all, but by Allāh, you didn’t even reach my expenses.”
[Meaning: “Your price was far too low.”] |

Buyer: *Ma krahnāsh sīdi. Allāh yi'āwn.* "I can't be pushed further,
Sir. May Allāh help you!"
[Meaning: "No deal."] (Wadia 2000)

Interactive

"The weather will change, the rains will come, and our herds will survive, *inshā' Allāh*" (Langewiesche 1991). Since the aforementioned outlines a plan for the future and cannot, therefore, be stated with any certainty, the use of *inshā' Allāh* is obligatory. So often does *inshā' Allāh* occur in daily discourse that it has taken on the appearance of a semantic future marker. Although *inshā' Allāh* translates, "If Allāh wills it," the phrase does not, according to native Arabic speakers, correspond to the traditional "if" equation in English. In this circumstance, the speaker would say simply, "If I can, I'll get that done tomorrow." In Arabic it would be said, "If I can, I'll get that done tomorrow, *inshā' Allāh*," adding a third element to the equation; an element which acknowledges that individual effort is not the ultimate determiner of success. Another development of the meaning of *inshā' Allāh* in recent years occurs when someone asks for a favor. If one limits their response to *inshā' Allāh*, the person will understand that you actually will not be able to do it, but without having to deliver an outright "No." The responsibility rests with Allāh (Darrat). Hence, a semantic shift from "yes, God-willing" to "maybe" or even "no, leave it to Allāh" may be taking place.

Further interactional use is exemplified in sympathy or condolence phrases such as *'azzam Allāh ajrak* [May Allāh reward you], which has an illocutionary meaning quite different from the content. The pragmatic meaning, "You are suffering a great deal, but that which has been taken from you will leave you stronger and more blessed in God's eyes" (Şafar), does not infer a reward in the sense of money or riches, but rather in spiritual value.

It is not only in the marketplace where the Allāh Lexicon appears with specialized conventions. The conversation below between two gentlemen of long friendship expresses parental concerns found worldwide. These sentiments comply with the guidelines for interactional discourse. It utilizes the lexicon in a

manner understood by the *cognoscenti*.

Oh, those kids!

- Aḥmed: *Kayf ḥāl awlādik?*
“How are your kids?”
- Faisal: *Allāh yahdīhum.*
“May God direct them to the right path.”
[Meaning: “They’re not doing all that well.”]
- Aḥmed: *Wa Allāh, ‘andak al-ḥaq. Māshallāh m’a hād al-jīl.*
“By Allāh, you have the right of it. Allāh’s wonder on this generation.”
[Meaning: “Without Allāh’s help, I don’t hold out a lot of hope for them.”]
- Faisal: *Māshallāh wa khlās.*
“The wonders of God and nothing more.”
[Meaning: “There’s nothing else we can hope for.”]
(Wadia)

These two gentlemen share a close and confident relationship, yet, as is the case in many such friendships, this does not always extend to offering specific information. In reviewing this dialogue, the outsider is left wondering, but the two speakers have consummated the discussion to their own satisfaction. In essence, like parents the world over, they have mourned the faults and missteps of the younger generation. They have accomplished this operation through the use of Allāh Lexicon phrases calling on the Maker to guide their children and forgive them their indiscretions.

Building on the interactive and transactional functions outlined by Yule (1996) are the pragmatic levels of use assigned to phrases such as proverbs and adages. Just as Grzybec distinguishes the functions of proverbs, it might be said that many of the Allāh Lexicon phrases “sum up a situation, pass judgment, recommend a course of action, or serve as secular past precedents for present action: but to say this does not tell us what the particular function of a particular [phrase] used by a particular individual in a particular setting is” (Grzybec 2). The examples below illustrate how these descriptives are met within standard use of the Allāh Lexicon. However, since this is an introductory study only, such examples should not be taken as the *dernier cri* [last word] in terms of linguistic

or syntactic analysis.

1. Summing up a situation: In English, we might say, "It's raining."
In Arabic, using the Allāh Lexicon, the same sentence would be: *innahā tumfir, wa alḥamdulillāh*, [It's raining, praise be to Allāh.]
2. Recommending [or requesting] a course of action: In English, "Please close the door."

In Moroccan colloquial Arabic it would be phrased: *sidd al-bāb, Allāh yijāzīk* [Close the door, if you would please Allāh]
3. Pass judgement: *Allāh yi 'āwn* [May Allāh help him]
4. Serving as a secular past precedent for future action: *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh* [There is no might nor power save Allāh]

It can be concluded from this analysis that phrases from the Allāh Lexicon function broadly and pivotally throughout Arabic discourse, finding positions in interactional speech and transactional speech, all the while expanding into pragmatic areas through the manner in which the items function in context.

8. Religion and Language

While the Allāh Lexicon is not the sole property of Muslims, based on the various Qur'ānic verses which encourage its use, there is an undeniable link to religion. Islām has, undoubtedly, affected both the spread and dominance of the lexicon among native Arabic speakers. Fishman describes Arabic as a "holy language," in that the language cannot be separated from the religion that arose within its use (11).⁷

Speakers of Arabic and those who read it via their devotion to the Qur'ān recognize the language as directly dispensing Allāh's word and law, as well as the words of the earliest disciples of those pronouncements. In this sense, it is easy to understand why "holy languages" may well be laden with supplementary levels of implicature. Granting that even the most sacred of these languages edges toward a vernacular in the conversational practices of its adherents, Fishman asserts that dialectal and ease of articulation variants are merely an accommodation to human

nature and not a diminution of the language's import (1997: 12). Thus, as specific regions throughout the Arabic-speaking world create their own version of Arabic through the use of varied pronunciation patterns, the addition of idioms, or diverse pragmatic use, the "holiness" of the language is not minimized or impaired.

Through the Allāh Lexicon, those who are directly connected to Arabic have absorbed a repertoire of divine sentiment into their daily speech, assigning Allāh influence over every area of their lives. The array of items within the Allāh Lexicon demonstrates this component of identity as it is exhibited both by elective and affective elements of lifestyle. "The terms 'elective' [meaning chosen] and 'affective' [meaning derived from feeling]" (Hetherington 49) can be directly connected to religious identification, given that a religion is both a chosen feature of a lifestyle and one intended to give voice to emotion and mirror a response to it.

9. Methods and Materials

9.1 Research Questions

The language feature herein labeled the Allāh Lexicon, its function in Arabic and the frequency of its usage were the initial issues of concern for this study. The research questions that are addressed in this study, based on the available literature and direct investigation, include the following: 1) Is the Allāh Lexicon an essential language feature of Arabic? 2) How do the items from the Allāh Lexicon function in the language? and 3) What is the perceived frequency of usage of items from the lexicon by native Arabic speakers?

9.2 Methods Analysis

In order to clarify the importance of the Allāh Lexicon to native speakers of Arabic, it was first necessary to explore the feature itself. Initially, an analysis was conducted of the Allāh Lexicon in context: how these phrases are used in written and spoken venues and how those applications reveal themselves linguistically. To that end, examples of the lexicon were taken from books, emails, letters, spoken discourse, documents, speeches, radio and television broadcasts, and then analyzed in terms of their semantic use and function. Once that information was assembled, a second stratum of investigation examined a

selected portion of the same broad lexicon, this time focusing on the frequency of use among Arabic L1 speakers.

9.3 Survey: General Outline

A four-page survey, entitled “Language Survey: Arabic and Culture,” addressed several areas of information. Section I asked for pertinent demographic information, including name, age [within a decade], educational background, language study history and venues, current residence, and length of residence. Section II initiated the Allāh Lexicon survey, listing 32 sample phrases.

Since one area of investigation will look at when and how the actual or literal meaning of the lexical item differs from its pragmatic role as defined by both the speaker and the listener, for the purposes of exemplification, selection of 32 Allāh Lexicon phrases were chosen for their familiarity to a group of Ohio University Arabic-speaking students from the Persian Gulf region, Lebanon, Jordan, and North Africa. The phrases are listed in the order that they were listed on that survey rather than in results-driven order. The English translations are approximate (Table 8).

Table 8: Allāh Lexicon Phrases in Common Use (Survey Section II)

	Transliteration	Translation
1	<i>Bismillāh; Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm</i>	In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful
2	<i>Alḥamdulillāh</i>	Praise be to Allāh
3	<i>Lā ilāha illā Allāh</i>	There is no god but Allāh
4	<i>inshā' Allāh</i>	If it please Allāh / If Allāh wills it
5	<i>Wa Allāh</i>	By Allāh! [Really!]
6	<i>Allāh yakhlf</i>	May Allāh replace all you have used
7	<i>Allāh yi'awn</i>	Allāh will help him
8	<i>Allāh yjīb</i>	Allāh will bring [what you need]
9	<i>Allāh ysahhal</i>	May Allāh make it easy
10	<i>Allāh yfarraj</i>	May Allāh take the burden
11	<i>Allāh yishūf fik</i>	Allāh watches over you
12	<i>Allāh yikhaṣak</i>	May Allāh reward you [as appropriate]
13	<i>Allāh y'lam</i>	Allāh knows best
14	<i>Allāh yaḥfadh</i>	May Allāh protect
15	<i>'Aẓẓam ajrak</i>	May Allāh reward you largely
16	<i>'Afāk Allāh</i>	May Allāh heal
17	<i>Fī amānillāh</i>	Go under the protection of Allāh
18	<i>Sīr 'alā Allāh</i>	Go with Allāh
19	<i>Allāh yi'ammār</i>	May Allāh fill [your circumstance]
20	<i>Allāh yarḥam al-wālidīn</i>	May Allāh have compassion on your parents
21	<i>Allāh yslaḥ atarika</i>	May Allāh guide your children
22	<i>Allāh y'aṭik al-ṣiḥḥah</i>	May Allāh give you health
23	<i>Allāh yaghnīk</i>	May Allāh make you rich [not related to money]
24	<i>Allāh yiṣāwab</i>	May Allāh fix
25	<i>Bārakallāh fik</i>	Allāh's blessings be upon you
26	<i>Allāh yi'awnna wi y'awnik</i>	May Allāh help us and help you
27	<i>Allāh yastar</i>	May Allāh watch over/cover you
28	<i>Allāh yiyssar</i>	May Allāh ease the situation
29	<i>Allāh ya'fu</i>	May Allāh grant you clemency
30	<i>Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh</i>	There is no might nor power outside of Allāh
31	<i>Subḥāna Allāh</i>	Glory be to Allāh
32	<i>Allāh yushāfik</i>	May Allāh cure

In reviewing this list, the literal translations of individual items from the Allāh Lexicon fall into several categories, with the largest one ensuring that the believer calls on Allāh for all his or her needs and desires or appeals to enlist Allāh’s aid on behalf of another person. Certain phrases may fit directly into more than one category, but it will be shown later in the study that they may be used in a context totally distinct from their original and literal meaning and so may devolve from one category to another without loss of meaning or impact (Table 3).

Table 9: Classification of Items within Use Categories

Use Category	Item Number
Exhortation	1, 17, 18, 20, 25
Plea for assistance (on behalf of self or other) or Wishing the best for someone	3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 11, 32, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32
Honoring Allāh	3, 13, 31, 30
Gratitude	2, 6, 12, 19

Section III was used in this study to analyze the transfer possibilities for essential Allāh Lexicon phrases; in other words the ability of English to accommodate the phrase in translation as well as in pragmatic use. It inquired into the informant’s ten most frequently used phrases based on the Allāh Lexicon and asked for the occasions for use of each phrase (Table 20).

Table 10: Occasions for use of Allāh Lexicon Phrases (Survey Section III)

Expression (Give the # of the phrase from the previous pages.)	Under what circumstances do you usually use this phrase?	Other possible situations for use:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

9.4 Informants

To conduct this survey, 54 native Arabic-speaking individuals were chosen: 26 of these informants were then residing in the United States, and 28 were living in Arabic-speaking countries, though not necessarily the country of their birth. These informants responded to requests for survey subjects that were sent to a number of university-based Arab Student Unions, the Middle East Studies departments at a variety of universities, suggested individuals, and, in one case, a large class of legal scholars in Jordan. With the exception of four subjects, those from Pakistan, all members of the pool of respondents were native Arabic speakers. In the case of those from Pakistan, Arabic represents a language essential to religious practice and, in many cases, educated discourse. Copies of the survey were mailed, faxed or handed out to over 100 subjects.⁸ Since the survey was written in English and related in other sections not used for this study to issues and to questions regarding use of that language, a certain level of English competence was required of the respondents. It was understood from the outset that previous English language study implied a more highly educated respondent than might have been necessary for a survey written entirely in Arabic. A total of nine Arabic-speaking countries were represented (Egypt, Iraq,

Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait), with the addition of Pakistan. By surveying students from eleven Arab countries, representing the three major dialect zones, the Persian Gulf, the Levant, and North Africa, we can safely generalize our results about all Arabic speakers. In terms of gender, there were 17 female respondents and 37 male respondents. Both genders are well represented, contributing to the validity of the results. All of the informants had completed high school and many held a Bachelor's and Master's degree (Table 11). Notable in the area of demographics is the larger proportion of 20 to 30 year-olds in the informant group, a positive presence as the language of this age group is neither infantile nor archaic, representing the current state of the language. The high frequency of young adults can be accounted for by the fact that universities were a major source of responses. In addition, there is double the number of men as women. Whether this is due to more males attending university, or males being more willing to contribute personal information to the study, cannot be determined from the data provided.

Table 11: Demographic Breakdown of all Survey Respondents
54 Native Arabic Speakers

26 U.S Residents	28 Non-Residents
Education	Education
29% Some College	39% College
25% College	61% Masters
38% Masters	
Age	Age
1 Age 15-20	0 Age 15-2-
16 Age 20-30	16 Age 20-30
5 Age 30-40	6 Age 30-40
2 Age 40-50	2 Age 40-50
0 Age 50-60	2 Aged 50-60
Sex	Sex
17 Males and 9 Females	20 Males and 8 Females

The frequency of usage was assessed in the following way: Respondents checked boxes which corresponded to the following categories: frequently [5 or more times per day], often [1 to 5 times per day], regularly [1 to 5 times per week], seldom [1 to 2 times per month], rarely [1 to 2 times per year], and never.

The frequencies were then converted into annual usage, such that the “frequently” category represented nearly 2,000 or more times per year, the “often” category represented approximately 1,000 times per year, the “regularly” category represented around 200 times per year, the “seldom” category represented approximately 20 times per year, and the “rarely” category represented once or twice per year.

Frequency distributions were presented for all respondents, and subsequently comparisons were made between native Arabic-speaking respondents living in Arabic-speaking countries or living in the United States. These groups were designated Non-Residents and Residents respectively. To investigate the role of gender in the use of these phrases, comparisons were also made between men and women both in and outside the United States. When respondents chose to leave an item on the survey blank, a zero was assigned to that item. All other responses had a numeric designation. Zeros were not considered when making frequency comparisons or determining arithmetic means.

10. Results

The results of the respondents’ self-reported yearly use of the lexicon offer compelling evidence of the essential nature of the Allāh Lexicon in daily discourse (Table 21). While not every phrase is used by every respondent, the participants’ perceived use, as a body, indicates that the lexicon’s influence is unmistakable.

Table 12: All Survey Items by Yearly Usage

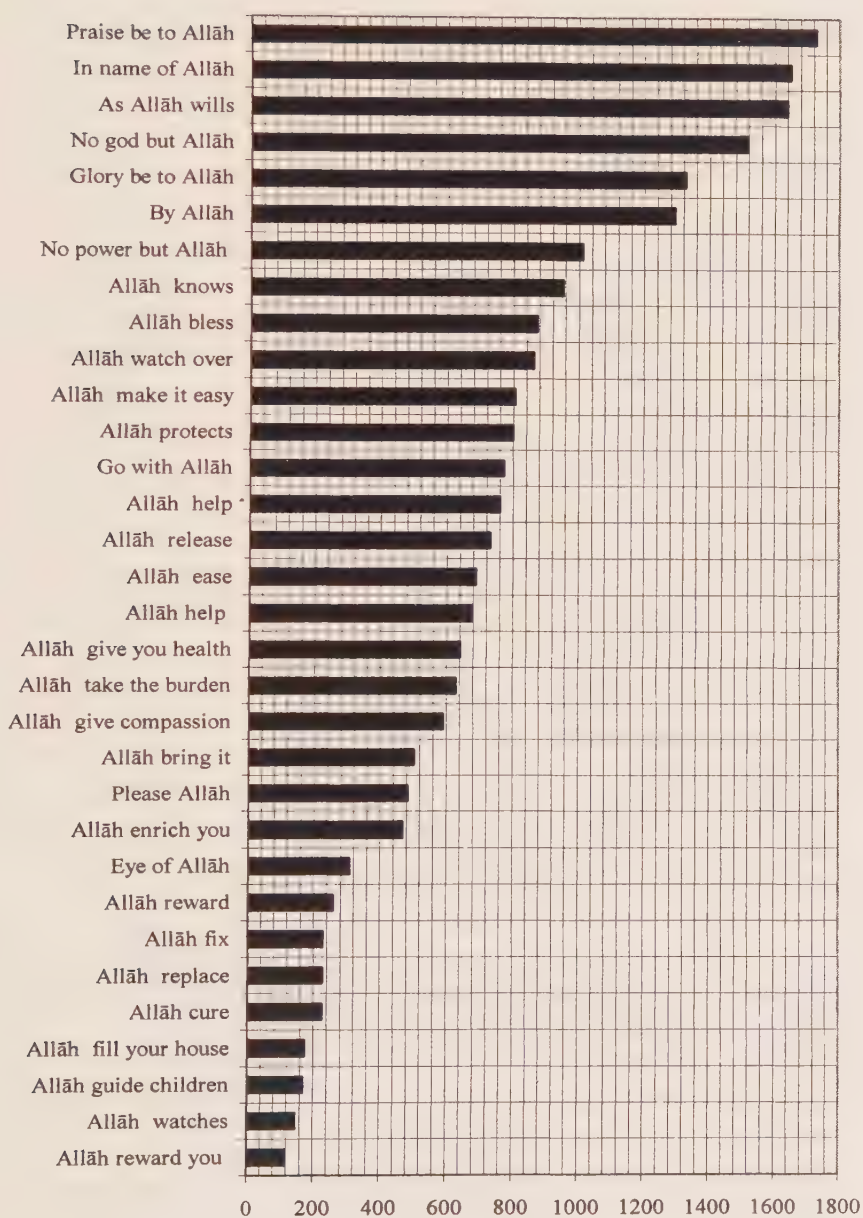


Table 13: Frequency of Allāh Lexicon Phrases for all 54 Respondents

<i>Number</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>Occurences</i>		<i>Frequency</i>
2	Praise be to Allāh	1,729	a	High
1	In the name of Allāh	1,649	a	High
4	As Allāh wills	1,640	a	High
3	No god but Allāh	1,516	ab	High
31	Glory be to Allāh	1,326	bc	High
5	By Allāh	1,294	bc	High
30	No power but Allāh	1,012	cd	High
13	Allāh knows	953	d	Medium
25	Allāh bless	873	de	Medium
27	Allāh watch over	862	de	Medium
9	Allāh make it easy	806	de	Medium
14	Allāh protects	801	de	Medium
17	Go with Allāh	773	def	Medium
7	Allāh help	762	de	Medium
29	Allāh release	730	defg	Medium
28	Allāh ease	689	efg	Medium
26	Allāh help	677	efg	Medium
22	Allāh give you health	642	efg	Low
10	Allāh take the burden	630	efg	Low
20	Allāh give compassion	591	efg	Low
8	Allāh bring it	502	fgh	Low
16	Please Allāh	484	ghj	Low
23	Allāh enrich you	469	ghij	Low
18	Eye of Allāh	308	hijk	Low
12	Allāh reward	259	jk	Low
24	Allāh fix	228	jk	Low
6	Allāh replace	227	jk	Low
32	Allāh cure	226	jk	Low
19	Allāh fill your house	175	k	Low
21	Allāh guide children	169	k	Low
11	Allāh watches	147	k	Low
15	Allāh reward you	118	k	Low

Statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) between the means was determined by a Duncan's multiple range test following an analysis of variance using log transformed data. Means followed by a different letter are statistically significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

10.1 Frequency (Yearly Usage)

The mean responses per year were divided into three frequency groups based upon Duncan's Multiple Range Test (Table 23). In the high frequency group, respondents used these Allāh Lexicon phrases more than a thousand times per year, or on average of three to five times per day. In the middle frequency group, phrases were used approximately one to two times per day. In the low frequency group, the phrases were used once or twice per week. Graphically, the data indicate clear distinctions between the high frequency group, the middle frequency group, and the low frequency group (Table 23). Comparisons between individuals who reside in Arabic-speaking countries or who reside in English-speaking countries, as well as comparisons between men and women or between certain national/ethnic groups, were all compiled for each of these frequency groupings. Highlights of the findings in each area will be presented.

The results of the frequency survey (Table 21) reveal that the phrases of the highest level of usage are also those that are offered in the greatest number of social and life situations and have compelling religious function and status. *alḥamdulillāh* or "Praise be to Allāh" is habitually spoken whenever an ending of any kind occurs, such as when a meal is over, when a project is finished, when a loved one returns, or when a baby is born. Several informants mentioned that this phrase may come up more than five times per day, but given the limits originally set out, with a maximum possible yearly usage of 1,825, *alḥamdulillāh*'s average of 1,725 per year gives evidence of the phrase's significance.

When asked to give situations where *alḥamdulillāh* needs to be used, the respondents offered dozens of examples as a group, but only two or three individually, indicating, perhaps a lack of complete awareness about when and how they use this phrase. Perhaps *alḥamdulillāh* is an extremely flexible usage, since the phrase is actually a type of "thank you" for Allāh. Respondents indicated that they used this phrase in all of the following situations: after eating, after a difficult job, after a slight accident, in bad times, during periods of relief following stress, during prayers, when you are hoping everything is okay, when greeting anyone, when you receive a favor from someone, after burping, when

asked about one's health, after sneezing, when arriving home safely, when asked, "How are you?," when receiving anything, good or bad, when you're full, and when anything hoped for and wanted happens.

Following closely behind *alḥamdulillāh* is *Bismillāh* or *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* [In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful], which is used in daily speech "at the beginning of everything" (Ṣafar). When someone is starting a speech, *Bismillāh* or *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* is a requisite preface to the content. Similarly, one would hear this phrase before beginning a meal, or a project, or a ceremony. In addition, it is the phrase which begins every verse of the Qur'ān with the exception of Sūrat al-Tawbah [The Repentance], at the heading of official stationary for countries and municipalities throughout the Arabic-speaking world, and even in literature such as *The Arabian Nights* (Burton 1850), already mentioned. Likewise, the survey respondents recorded a variety of discourse situations calling for *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*: when thanking God, in bad times, before doing things, during prayers, before eating a meal, getting into a car, when starting some project, before reading the Qur'ān,⁹ when slaughtering a sheep, when going to sleep and before beginning any good deed.¹⁰ Actually, in the case of slaughtering, Darrat explains, the phrasing is altered slightly.

When slaughtering a sheep one uses only *bismillāh* without *al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*, but followed [among Sunnīs] by *Allāhu Akbar*. It is inappropriate to use the attributes of mercy and compassion while in the process of killing. The invocation of Allāh's name here is to express that the legitimacy for the slaughtering is [requisite] upon the permission of Allāh. Slaughtering must be done according to His instructions, and for a legitimate reason. (2005)

These, too, reflect life events which may occur multiple times every day. On the other hand, phrases like those translated below from the survey list received far fewer high frequency responses possibly due to both fewer perceived venues for use and/or a possible national or regional preference favoring another phrase in its place. *Inshā' Allāh* had results almost identical to *Bismillāh*, charting

1,640 on the average uses per year in its function as a marker for future plans, events, and aspirations. Again the wide variety of occasions for use is mirrored in this elevated survey result. It is a natural response to “I’ll see you tomorrow” or “The mail will get here in an hour” or “Everything will be okay” (Wadia). These are not major events; they are daily events, and *inshā’ Allāh* is offered in every case. As vital to the language culture as the phrases above might be, they do not hold the place in culture and religion assigned to *lā ilāha illā Allāh* [There is no god but Allāh] which has the fourth highest frequency numbers, approximately 1,516 uses per year. *Lā ilāha illā Allāh* [There is no god but Allāh] is considered one of the pillars of Islām. It is not merely a linguistic unit, but a core belief of the religion. Indeed, in *Islām Our Choice*, we read that *lā ilāha illā Allāh*

[P]resents the concept of *tawhīd* [unity of God]...*Tawhīd* is a revolutionary concept and constitutes the essence of the teachings of Islām. It means .there is *one* Supreme Lord of the universe. He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent...the Sustainer of the world, and of mankind.
(3)

The regular use of this phrase is inevitably a reaffirmation of the speaker’s faith. Similarly, *subhāna Allāh* [Glory be to *Allāh*], as the phrase with the fifth highest usage, reiterates the underlying meaning of the maxim *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, speaking to the powerful influence of the Deity on daily life and all human behavior and natural occurrences. In normal use, *subhāna Allāh* is expressed in moments of awe and wonder, such as in acknowledgement of the miracle of each day’s movement toward night. Many native Arabic speakers use this phrase when falling asleep. Other occasions for use might be when someone sees something extraordinarily beautiful: a sunset, a mountain, a storm, or a new baby who, for example, looks exactly like another relative.

The last phrase which qualified in the high frequency group is *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh* [There is no might nor power outside of Allāh]. Though phrased differently, it reflects the same sentiments as *subhāna Allāh*, in that it recognizes the ultimate omnipotence of *Allāh* over human will. *Lā ḥawla wa lā*

quwwata illā billāh is chanted when a deceased person is being carried to the cemetery in Morocco. It is also used to express sorrow or as a caution when a situation may be out of one's hands and the capacity for personal control has been reached.

Table 14:
Differences between Resident and Non-Resident Groups for the High, Mid, and Low Frequency Phrases from the Allāh Lexicon

Phrase # from survey	Phrase	U.S Resident Average	Non-U.S Resident Average	Comments SSD = Statistically Significant Difference LD = Large Difference
2	Thank Allāh	1,769a	1,692a	
1	In the name of Allāh	1,693a	1,607a	
4	As Allāh	1,602a	1,678a	
3	No god but Allāh	1,392a	1,637a	LD
31	Glory be to Allāh	1,347a	1,307a	
5	By Allāh	1,263a	1,328a	
30	There is no might no power outside of Allāh	1,193a	844b	SSD
13	Allāh knows	1,108a	810b	SSD
17	Go with Allāh	1,033a	530b	SSD
27	Allāh watch over you	1,001a	740a	LD
25	Allāh bless you*	902a	845a	
14	Allāh protect you	886a	720a	
29	Allāh release you	789a	675a	
26	Allāh help you/us	754a	603a	
28	Allāh ease	657a	722a	
9	May Allāh make it easy	377a	618a	LD
7	Allāh help	264a	189a	
22	Allāh give health	781a	517b	SSD
20	Allāh grant compassion	641a	543a	
16	If Allāh wills	636a	346b	SSD
23	Allāh make you rich	609a	332b	SSD
10	Allāh take the burden	574a	682a	
12	Allāh reward	329a	179b	SSD
6	Allāh replace	264a	189a	
18	Eye of Allāh	264a	348a	
32	Allāh cure	252a	202a	
21	Allāh guide your kids	228a	115a	
24	Allāh fix	194a	265a	
19	Allāh fill your house	180a	171a	
11	Allāh watch over you	163a	134a	
8	Allāh bring it	37b	619a	SSD

Statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) between the means was determined by a Duncan's multiple range test following an analysis of variance using log transformed data. Means in the same row followed by a different letter are statistically significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

What is immediately noticeable from a comparison of the results for U.S. Residents and Non-U.S. Residents is that there are few statistically significant differences or large differences. The usage of phrases from the Allāh Lexicon is fairly even regardless of the location of the speaker. This supports the universality of the lexicon and its essential status across regional and national boundaries.

All of the phrases in the high frequency group are commonly used, whether or not the speaker is residing in the United States or in one of the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa (Table 27). This would indicate that these phrases are part of the fabric of everyday life and show great flexibility, since their usage is practically universal among the survey group. A large difference appears in the usage of “No God but Allāh” among the non-U.S. resident group, who use it 1,697 times per year versus 1,392 occasions of use among those living in the U.S. Though not statistically significant, the non-residents use the phrase less than the residents. This phrase constitutes half of the *shahādah*, which is the elemental statement of faith in Islām. By stating that “There is no god but Allāh” and adding “Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh,” converts declare their intent to become Muslim, and Muslims avow their adherence to their faith and its principles.

In addition, there is one phrase, *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh* [There is no might nor power outside of Allāh], which exhibits a differential usage between the resident group and the non-U.S. resident group. The U.S. residents used this phrase on the average of 1,193 times per year, while the Non-U.S. Residents noted only 844 uses per year.

One explanation for this result may lie in its occasions for use. This phrase is a verse from the Qur’ān, and it is one which tends to be used more often in intense situations or when something might be beyond the speaker’s control. Arabic-speaking residents of the U.S. may well find more occasions of cultural or practical confusion than those still living in a familiar culture.

In the middle frequency group, there were two phrases which showed a large difference in usage between U.S. residents and the non-U.S. residents (Table 27). U.S. residents use the phrases *Allāh ya’lam* [Allāh knows] and *fī amānillāh*

[Go with the protection of Allāh] more frequently than their non-resident compatriots, at a level of 1,108 versus 810 and 1,033 versus 530, respectively. It may be that these represent examples of phrases which aid the speaker in establishing connection and community with other Arabic speakers. It might also be that those people who have immigrated to the U.S. are more likely to use these phrases in daily life to enhance their sense of connection and tradition than those who remained at home. Conversely, survey phrase #9, *Allāh yusahhil* or “May Allāh make it easy,” evidences a large difference between the two groups, but in the opposite direction. Non-U.S. residents use this phrase 618 times in comparison to 377 for U.S. residents. It is possible that in Arabic-speaking countries, people more frequently encounter others in situations which call for *Allāh yusahhil* than in the U. S. This phrase is reported to be used when they “hope something will work out,” “when you intend to do something,” “to beggars who have a hard life,” “when someone asks for help and you can’t help,” and “before an exam or to friends who are facing a hard job.” At least in terms of the beggars, ubiquitous in large cities around the Arab world, this phrase would find regular use. Another feature of life in most Arabic-speaking cultures is that many people still walk around town rather than using cars exclusively. For this reason, daily encounters with beggars, friends, acquaintances, service people, and family are more likely to occur.

In the low-frequency usage results, one phrase is very surprising. “May Allāh reward you,” with a recorded use of 37 occasions per year, is rarely used by those residing in the United States, but among those living outside of the U.S, of which many were in the Levant region of Jordan and Lebanon, a frequency of 619 was achieved. This demonstrates a significant regional and cultural relationship between individual phrases and their patterns of use.

Table 15:
Differences between Selected National Groups for the High and Mid
Frequency Phrases from the Allāh Lexicon

#	Phrase	Average	Kuwaitis	Jordanians	Saudis	Morrocans
2	Praise to Allāh	1729ab	1833a	1728ab	1857a	1500b
1	In Name of Allāh	1649b	1833ab	1642b	2000a	1250c
4	As Allāh wills	1640a	1667a	1688a	1600a	1750a
3	No god but Allāh	1516a	1667a	1717a	1714a	800b
31	Glory to Allāh	1326c	1367c	1272c	2000a	1750b
5	By Allāh	1294b	1600a	1278b	1457ab	1750a
30	No power but Allāh	1012b	1033b	944b	1600a	555c
13	Allāh knows	953bc	1200ab	900c	1457a	1251a
25	Allāh's blessings	873c	868c	802c	1342b	1668a
27	Allāh watch over	862b	900b	810b	1602a	805b
9	Allāh make it easy	806b	837b	818b	1600a	400c
14	Allāh protects	801b	867b	769b	1317a	1300a
17	Go with Allāh	773c	1167b	475d	1715a	650cd
7	Allāh help	762bc	1004b	638c	1668a	1500a
29	Allāh release	730bc	1000ab	638c	1286a	600c
28	Allāh ease	689b	900b	737b	1487a	355c
26	Allāh help you	677b	567b	636b	1457a	805b

Statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) between the means was determined by a Duncan's multiple range test following an analysis of variance using log transformed data. Means in the same row followed by a different letter are statistically significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

Thus far, the survey results have confirmed broad usage of the Allāh Lexicon throughout the Arab world and among those native Arabic speakers residing in the United States. In pursuing the concept of essential use, the study investigated the variations of frequency among the four primary nationality groups represented by the survey respondents at the high and mid range of frequency (Table 15). The most notable result in the high and mid usage among nationals is the dominance of the Saudi Arabian group in terms of overall frequency. Relating to 13 of the 17 phrases listed, the Saudi respondents reported higher levels of use than the other nationalities. While it would be a distortion to say that the Saudi respondents were more reverent than the other nationalities, Saudi Arabia is well known as a more conservative nation than the others listed in Table 15. In addition, it may well be that, living as they do in the country where

Islām was delivered, where Muḥammad shared its precepts, and where Makkah attracts millions of pilgrims each year, Saudis are encouraged by such proximity to demonstrate faith in a wider variety of circumstances and occasions. The results of their surveys would seem to indicate a tendency to use the lexicon at every opportunity. Proof of this arose when we recorded the number of Allāh Lexicon phrases used by a Saudi friend in a long distance conversation with his mother. In that six-minute conversation, during which both participants were exchanging pleasantries evenly, Ḥamza used 17 Allāh Lexicon phrases. Even granting that his mother was from an older and possibly more conservative generation than his own and therefore expected such use, their speech was heavily weighted in honorifics, calls on Allāh's assistance, and thanks for His bounty (Ghulman). In reviewing the Saudi surveys, what stood out was how infrequently the Saudi respondents used the Seldom, Rarely and Never categories for any of their responses.

Three areas of significant statistical difference in the Kuwaiti, Jordanian, and Moroccan surveys arise with survey phrase #3 "There is no god but Allāh," #9 "May Allāh make it easy," and #28, "May Allāh ease [your plight]." For each of these phrases, Moroccans reported much lower frequencies than their Levant and Gulf compatriots. Survey phrase #3, "There is no god but Allāh," which is the first phrase of the *shahādah* or declaration of faith, carries with it a prominent religious wake. For some reason, it has never gained a significant place in the Allāh Lexicon phrases most often used in the region of the Maghreb [Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania]. Indeed, regionalism and other influences may account for other statistically significant differences in usage among all nationalities. Darrat advises that,

According to some traditions one should stay away of saying just the first part of the *shahādah* [profession of faith]. One should say the complete *lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadun Rasūl Allāh*. Many of the people in those countries will respond with the second part of it, in case the person used only *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. The length of the whole *shahādah* [profession of faith] could be one reason for the lesser use of it outside the religious context. (2005)

Morocco has long been influenced by France and a generally European viewpoint. The educated populace studies French as early as elementary school and those who choose to identify strongly with a perceived French societal preeminence are more likely to use French than Arabic even in their homes. As a result, those lexicon phrases which are easily transferred to French, such as “By Allāh” and “Allāh knows,” are found at higher levels of use than those which have more noteworthy religious connotations but are less easily transferred. Those phrases which have high-frequency use in Morocco include: “By Allāh,” “Allāh knows,” “Allāh’s blessings be upon you,” and “as Allāh wills.” Among Moroccans, use of “Allāh bless you” or *bārakallāh fīk* is extremely high at 1,668 occasions for use per year. This figure surpasses even the Saudi level of use, and is statistically significantly different than either the Kuwait or Jordanian groups, which logged 868 and 802 respectively. Richard S. Harrell is thus correct in asserting the expression “God bless you,” which is used as an equivalent for “thank you,” is “exceedingly common” in Moroccan Arabic (335). Darrat explains the possible reasons for such regional differences:

Here again the term *shukran* for “thank you” is not very common in the Maghrib countries with just a few or no Christian natives. One reason for that could be the fact that *shukran* was commonly used by Christian Arabs in Egypt and in the Levant influenced by the secularization in their circles. (2005).

Most closely balanced in their responses were the Kuwaiti and Jordanian groups, though statistically significant differences arose with “By Allāh,” “Allāh knows,” “Go with Allāh,” “Allāh helps,” and “Allāh release you.” In every case, the Kuwaiti group recounted a higher level of use than the Jordanians. Whether this occurred because of a diminished use of the lexicon in Jordan or because they have similar phrases for the same circumstances which were not listed on the survey is difficult to know. Certainly, in the case of higher Moroccan use of *bārakallāh fīk* than among the other nations, there is a distinct possibility that in other regions a different phrase is chosen for use in the same venues.

11. Conclusions

In his chapter on “The Omnipresence of Allāh in the Arabic language,” John Morrow has established that the word *Allāh* is the most frequently used content word in Arabic. Rising to supremacy out of the verses of the Qur’ān itself, *Allāh* and the plethora of phrases of the Allāh Lexicon have formed an immutable bond between Muslim Arabic-speaking people, their daily communication, and the religion that sustains them. As a means of demonstrating reverence, acknowledging Allāh’s omnipotence in regard to all aspects of human life, and creating connections with other Muslim through this glossary of exoteric and esoteric code words, the Allāh Lexicon has grown in variety and application through fourteen centuries of unrelenting use.

This study has touched on a few of the pragmatic areas covered by the lexicon, and it examined a limited range of words and phrases contained within its broad boundaries. More remains to be done if this extraordinary language feature is to be fully understood and appreciated. Future studies may look at arenas of use, such as which Allāh Lexicon phrases appear during holidays and celebrations, or, as al-Khaṭīb and El-Sayed have done, consider specific national or regional patterns of use within the Arabic-speaking world and how the various dialects and vernacular alter usage.

Another question which looms is how the Allāh Lexicon will be regarded and utilized by the younger generations. In the modern world, when youth-oriented cultures are sweeping the globe, will these aspects of tradition and reverence go the way of opening doors for ladies? While that work waits to be done, the Allāh Lexicon may still be viewed as a system of moment-to-moment devotion as well as attachment to history and community. It is to be hoped that other scholars will discover all the different ways that the Allāh Lexicon has been lifted from the pages of the Qur’ān and wrapped warmly, comfortably, and permanently around the lives of Muslims throughout the Arab world.

Finally, the most critical reason for further exploration of this topic is to develop greater understanding about Muslims in general and Arabic-speaking Muslims in particular, in order to avoid a repetition of ethnic stereotyping and

linguistic misunderstandings which have recently sprung up at Guantánamo Bay, in many venues since 9/11, and in regard to EgyptAir Flight 990. The Allāh Lexicon is a colorful, complex, and culturally significant linguistic resource which deserves to be explored as a positive reflection on Arab/Islāmic culture rather than a source of threat or negativity. None of the phrases detailed here gives a hint of other than a desire to build community through shared pragmatics. You will note that this study gave birth to many more questions than it answered. Yet, it has accomplished its primary purpose in proving that the Allāh Lexicon is a vital component of the Arabic language, primarily as it is spoken and utilized by Muslims.

End Notes

¹ Editor's Note: According to Elizabeth Bergman, Moroccan and Egyptian Arabic share few proverbs and, although the two groups of texts may be integral parts of a large whole called 'the Arabic proverb,' they appear to consist of two different sets of materials (226). As many Arabic proverbs include Allāh phrases, what applies to this segment of the Allāh Lexicon may very well apply to its whole: namely, that the various Arabic dialects share a common body of universal Allāh expressions as a core, enriched by a multitude of regional varieties.

² Editor's Note: Although being Christian, the Maltese, like other Arabic speakers, refer to God as Allāh, despite the fact that their language contains numerous borrowings from Italian and English.

³ Editor's Note: While studying Arabic in Morocco, an American student observed: "You can't study Arabic without starting to become a Muslim."

⁴ Editor's Note: On the same comical note, Ariana Afghan Airlines, is nicknamed Inshā' Allāh Airlines by Afghans who make fervent prayers that the old fleet of planes will take off, fly, and land safely. It may also reflect the low value placed on punctuality in much of the Islāmic world.

⁵ Editor's Note: Foreign cartoons, whether translated or dubbed into Arabic, are supplemented with Allāh expressions, giving an entirely new religious dimension to works which were originally secular in nature.

⁶ Editor's Note: As we have shown in "The Origin of the Allāh Lexicon," many of the major Allāh expressions are religiously dictated.

⁷ Editor's Note: Dilworth Parkinson has observed that "[m]any very religious Egyptian men use MSA orally, if somewhat inconsistently, in their daily lives, apparently simply as a mark of their religiosity" (71).

⁸ Editor's Note: While surveying is important, there is always a question of external validity. Students may not receive the survey, others may be dishonest and some may not answer at all, having an impact on the final results of the survey. Typically, these variables are small and their effects are minimal on the results. Since the survey is subjective, and based on unscientific impressions, the results reflect more the perceived frequency of the Allāh Lexicon as opposed to its actual frequency.

⁹ Editor's Note: The recitation of the Qur'ān commences by voicing *a'ūdhu billāhi mina al-Shayṭān al-Rajīm*, *Bismillāh al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*, "I take refuge in Allāh from Satan the Rejected; In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful," with the exception of Sūrat al-Tawbah [The Repentance]. According to H.A.R. Gibb's *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islām*, the jurists of Madīnah, Baṣra and Syria, did not consider the *basmalah* as a verse at the beginning of the Fātiḥah or other Sūras (60). They held that it was placed there to separate the Sūras and as a benediction (60). This is the view of the Ḥanafī school of jurisprudence, which requires the *basmalah* to be mentioned mentally and not orally. The jurists from Makkah and Kūfah, held that the *basmalah* was indeed a verse at the beginning of the Fātiḥah and the other Suras (60).

¹⁰ Editor's Note: Some Muslims say "In the name of Allāh," prior to consuming alcohol or doing drugs, both of which are strictly forbidden in Islām.

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Chapter 3

The Origin of the Allāh Lexicon

By John A. Morrow

1. Introduction

With the advent of Islām in the seventh century, the Arabic language and culture underwent a radical and revolutionary transformation. By the end of Muḥammad's prophethood in 632 C.A., every tribe in the Arabian Peninsula had rejected polytheism, embraced monotheism, accepted the *sharī'ah*, an all-embracing socio-political, legal, religious, economic and spiritual order, and placed the Qur'ān, the holy book of Islām, at the core of the community of believers. The Qur'ān, "whose genuineness is above suspicion" (Nicholson 143), became the basis of religion, law, jurisprudence, education and language and acted like a divine filter, accepting what was in accord with Islām from Arab culture and rejecting what was not. Being the first book ever published in the Arabic language, the Qur'ān established the standard of classical Arabic, the guide to good grammar, the path of eloquence, the source of style and the lifeblood of the lexicon, exercising "a unique influence on the history of the Arabic language and literature" (Nicholson xxiii). A linguistic document of incomparable importance, "[i]t was viewed as a source of grammatical and lexicographical information," "[i]ts stylistic inimitability notwithstanding, it even came to be treated as a standard for theories of literary criticism" (Rosenthal 321). As a literary monument, "the Koran...stands by itself, a production unique in Arabic literature, having neither forerunners nor successors in its own idiom" (Gibb 36). Unsurpassed in its rhetorical richness, even non-Muslim Orientalists have described the Qur'ān as miraculous. Hottinger admits that when "[c]onsidered from the point of view of its Arabic eloquence, the Koran is indeed a miracle" (24). Louis Massignon's acknowledgment that the Qur'ān is not the work of Muḥammad, single-handedly disavowed centuries of Western scholarship

aimed at undermining the origin of this divine *dīwān*.¹ In light of its lavish lyricism, the prowess of its poetic prose, the rhapsody of its rhythm, the multiplicity of meanings it manifests, its imposing impact on society, scholarship and science, in every respect, “there is...no single book that is as influential in any religion as the Qur’ān is in Islām” (Naṣr 23). Thanks to the Qur’ān, the success of Muḥammad’s mission, and the spread of Islām under the “Orthodox” Caliphs, the Arabic language became the sacred language of the entire Muslim world. “Due to this single book,” explains Wilson Bishai, “Arabic rose from almost complete insignificance to be the holy tongue of the second largest religious community in the world” (92). As a result, “in many countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, as well as the Middle East, the chantings of the Qur’ān in Arabic are heard daily in homes, over loudspeakers and in official gatherings--a clear evidence of the profound impression this single book from Arabia has left upon millions of the world’s inhabitants” (92). The language of the Qur’ān is held in such high regard that many Muslims call it *lughat Allāh*, the language of Allāh.² In the Holy Qur’ān, Allāh reveals that the Qur’ān existed prior to creation in the form of a Guarded Tablet (85: 21-22). In the Sunnah, the Tradition of the Prophet, Muḥammad says that “Allāh recited Sūrat al-Tawbah [The Repentence] and Sūrat Yā-Sīn [Mystic Letters Y.S.] one thousand years before creation” (Ghazālī). According to French Orientalist Jacques Berque, “[t]he Arabic language scarcely belongs to the world of men; rather, it seems to be lent to them” (190). As a holy language, directly dispensing God’s word and law, this classical language is invested with supplementary levels and layers of implicature not always evident to the outside observer. While Greek and Latin were infused with a new vocabulary as a result of the rise of Christianity, the saturation of spirituality into the Arabic language, which took place, via the Qur’ān and the Sunnah, with the arrival of Islām, may be unparalleled in human and linguistic history.

2. The Holy Qur'ān

The religion of Islām strongly recommends the recitation of the Qur'ān with assurances of rich rewards for remembrance of its Revealer. The very first word of the Qur'ānic revelation is the imperative *Iqra'*: "Read!" "Recite!" and "Proclaim!" the word of Allāh (96:1). Almighty Allāh asks Muḥammad and the Muslims to believe in the Qur'ān (6:92), to "Listen to it with attention, and hold your peace: that you may receive mercy" (7:204-206), to "recite the Qur'ān in slow, measured, rhythmic tones" (73:4), to "move not thy tongue concerning the [Qur'ān] to make haste therewith" (75:16), to "earnestly seek to understand the Qur'ān" (47:24), to "study it as it should be studied" (2:121) as it is easy to understand and to remember (19:97; 44:58; 54:17, 22, 32 and 40).

The Prophet Muḥammad encouraged Muslims to read, recite and memorize the Qur'ān. He said that "Reciting the Qur'ān is the best form of worship" (Ghazālī); "The Qur'ān is the best of intercessors, superior to prophets and angels..." (Ghazālī); "He who recites the Qur'ān belongs to the family of Allāh and His sincere servant" (Ghazālī); "The best of you is the one who learns the Qur'ān and teaches it" (Bukhārī, Ghazālī); "Do not envy but ... a man to whom Allāh has granted the Qur'ān and who recites it in prayer day and night" (Bukhārī and Muslim); and "Recite the Qur'ān until it prevents you from evil" (Ghazālī). When asked how people can purify their hearts, the Prophet told them to remember death and to recite the Qur'ān (Bayhaqī). Besides reciting parts of it every day during the five ritual prayers, devout Muslims read the Qur'ān regularly as an act of personal piety as well as for special occasions. All Muslims, both Arab and non-Arab, are encouraged to study classical Arabic as it is the language of the Qur'ān, the scholarly language of Islām, and the *lingua franca* of the Muslim world. As Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765-66) explained: "Acquire knowledge of Arabic for the final word of Allāh has been revealed in it" (qtd. in Pooya Yazdī 765).

While the Bible may indeed be the best selling book of all times, few Christians read it regularly and scarce are those who, even among priests and ministers, have read it completely, from cover to cover.³ Among Muslims,

though, memorization and recitation of parts of the Qur'ān are required in order to complete the five daily prayers. Furthermore, the complete recitation of the Qur'ān serves as a rite of passage for Muslim children. As such, the sacred scripture of the Muslim faith is the most read book in the world. Having been raised with its recitation, "[t]he Book, a breviary of maxims, prayers and stories will forever supply the adult with a tribunal to which he can submit his experience of the world" (Berque 191). As Laffin points out, "[t]he influence of the Koran cannot be over-emphasized. It is known to the least educated people and even to illiterates because it has for centuries been the main text in the village schools, and in weekly 'sermons' in the mosque" (44). If we consider that the most common noun in the Qur'ān is *Allāh*, and that the Qur'ān is the sourcebook of divine attributes and expressions, with every mention of the Deity becoming a possible formula--Allāh loves, Allāh guides, Allāh is Merciful, and so forth--we can imagine the central role its regular reading and recitation over the past 14 centuries has played in the diffusion of the Allāh Lexicon.⁴

3. The Sayings and the Sunnah⁵

While the Holy Qur'ān played a seminal role in the spread of the Allāh Lexicon, the Sayings and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad helped to solidify and disseminate it within the Arabic language and culture. These traditions, both prophetic and divine,⁶ are divided into general and specific sayings, all of which came to supplant the pre-Islāmic sayings.

3.1 Pre-Islāmic Pagan Sayings

Pre-Islāmic Arabs had many greetings and expressions, some related to religion and some not. According to 'Imrān b. Ḥusayn, a Companion of the Prophet, the Arabs in the pre-Islāmic period used to say "May Allāh make the eye happy for you" and "Good morning" but when Islām came the Muslims were forbidden from saying that (Abū Dāwūd). "May Allāh make the eye happy for you" is demonstrably an Allāh expression and is one of the few pre-Islāmic expressions which invoke the name of Allāh, who was already considered the Supreme Being among the Arab polytheists, much as Brahma was among the Hindus. The prohibition of this phrase, despite its use of the name of Allāh,

expresses a deliberate attempt on the part of the Prophet to purge the Arabic language of pre-Islāmic greetings and expressions and to replace them with a new, entirely Islāmic, corpus. While the Prophet was successful in eradicating the expression “May Allāh make the eye happy for you,” it has partially survived or resurfaced in the Levantine expression *Yā ‘aynī*, “O [light of] my eyes.” As for Muḥammad’s prohibition of “Good morning” or *ṣabāḥ al-khayr*, it appears to have been temporary in nature, no longer applicable after the almost universal acceptance of Islām among the Arabs, and meant merely as a means of differentiating the Muslim Arabs from the pagan Arabs.⁷

The greeting of peace, also used among Jews in the form of *shalom aleichem*, was introduced among the Arab Muslims as *al-salāmu ‘alaykum*. It succeeded in supplanting the pre-Islāmic greeting “May Allāh make your eye happy” but did not successfully replace *ṣabāḥ al-khayr* or “good morning” which was described by Ibn Ishāq (d. 768) as “the greeting of paganism” (319). In fact, on one occasion ‘Umayr approached the Prophet and said “Good morning.” The Prophet replied that “Allāh has honored us with a better greeting than thine... It is *salām*, the greeting of the inhabitants of paradise” (319) to which ‘Umayr responded “By Allāh, Muḥammad, you have taken to it only recently” (319) an indication that the *salām* greeting was novel, entirely Islāmic, and started by the Prophet, following the Qur’ānic commands “When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: ‘peace be on you’” (6:54), “When a greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, [at least] of equal courtesy” (4:86); and “If ye enter houses, salute each other-a greeting of blessing and purity from Allāh” (24:61). The minimum required response to *al-salāmu ‘alaykum* is *wa ‘alaykum al-salām*, “and peace be upon you,” as “[t]his is a kind of precise Islāmic form” (El-Sayed 19).

On another occasion, Kaladah bin Ḥanbal visited the Prophet and neither greeted him nor sought permission to enter. Upon this, the Prophet said: “Go back and say ‘*al-salāmu ‘alaykum*; may I enter?’” (Tirmidhī and Abū Dāwūd). The Prophet repeatedly reinforced the *salām* salutation with such sayings as “[The best part of Islām is] to provide food and say *salām*” (Bukhārī); “Indeed the

nearest of people to Allāh are those who begin with *salām*” (Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad); “When one of you meets his brother, he should say *salām* to him” (Abū Dāwūd); “The young should say *salām* to the old, the passer-by to the one sitting, and the small [group] to the large one” (Bukhārī); “When one of you arrives where people are seated, he should say *salām* to them. And when he wishes to leave, he should say *salām* to them” (Abū Dāwūd); “When you enter to where your family is, say *salām*. It is a blessing on you and on the people of your house” (Tirmidhī); “When you enter a house, say *salām* to its inhabitants, and when you go out, leave its inhabitants by saying *salām*” (Bayhaqī); and “Saying *salām* comes before talking” (Tirmidhī). When asked for a definition of the straight path, the Prophet responded that it was saying “Peace be upon you” (Bukhārī and Muslim) and said that saying *salām* when greeting people was an attribute of a believer (Bukhārī and Muslim) and that “The nearest people to Allāh are those who are the first in sending their *salām*” (Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, and Aḥmad).

During the pre-Islāmic period, the Arabs used to swear by Allāh, their pagan gods, the Black Stone which is housed in the Ka‘bah, and the names of their parents. The pre-Islāmic oaths to Allāh, some of which have long disappeared, included: *yamīnu Allāh* [I swear by Allāh]; its plural form *aymānu Allāhi*; its variants [*ay*]manul [*ay*]minul [*ay*]munu or shortened forms *a[y]mul a[y]mil a[y]ma*; or the shortest forms *mu/ma/mi*; as well as *ḥaramu Allāhi* [By the Sacredness of Allāh]; *‘amra Allāhi*, *‘amraka Allāh* or *lā ‘amru Allāhi* [By the Life/Age of Allāh] and *wa-ḥajjati Allāhi* [By the Pilgrimage to Allāh] (Masliyah 87). The most common oaths to pagan gods included: *Wa al-Lāt*, *Wa al-‘Uzzā*, *Wa Manāt* [By al-Lāt!, By al-‘Uzzā!, By Manāt!]. However, “even for deities, or God, there is hardly a place” in pre-Islāmic poetry where oaths are merely used to show the determination and inflexibility of the poet’s ego” (Hottinger 22). In fact, “[a]mong the pagan Arabs the use of oaths became so common that it almost ceased to have any solemn meaning” (‘Alī 1784). In other words, such oaths were more rhetorical than strictly religious. Swearing by the names of family members was frequent, the most common of which included: *wa ummī*, *wa abī*, *wa jaddī*

[By my mother!, By my father!, By my grandfather!].

Clearly, these common pre-Islāmic conventions could not continue under Islām and needed to be cast away, resulting in the following prophetic decrees: “Do not swear by your fathers or by your mothers or by rivals to Allāh, and swear by Allāh only, and swear by Allāh only when you are speaking the truth” (Abū Dāwūd); “Allāh forbids you to swear by your forefathers. If one of you swears, he must swear by Allāh or keep silence” (Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd); “Do not swear by your fathers” (Bukhārī); “He who swears by his honor [*amānah*] is not of our numbers” (Mālik); “It is detested to swear by other than Allāh’s names and attributes, whether by the Prophet, the Ka‘bah, the angels, the protection [of Allāh], one’s life, or soul...the most detested of all is swearing by the *amānah* [of Allāh]” (Nawawī); “If anyone swears by a religion other than Islām falsely, he is like what he said” (Bukhārī and Mālik); “Do not swear by your fathers; and whoever wants to swear should swear by Allāh” (Bukhārī); “Whoever swears saying in his oath ‘By Lat and al-‘Uzzā’ should say ‘None has the right to be worshipped by Allāh’” (Bukhārī); and clearly, the most categorical of all, “He who swears by anyone but Allāh is a polytheist” (Abū Dāwūd). The ancient oaths to Allāh and heathen deities were replaced with *wa Allāh* by itself or followed by an appropriate attribute, such as *wa Allāhi al-‘Aẓīm*, “By Allāh, the Most High,” applicable to the particular circumstance. Rather than diminishing human beings, the new Islāmic oaths elevated God, reinforcing the concept of Allāh as Supreme, as the focus of all life and activity.

With a few exceptions, pagan invocations disappeared from the Arabic language when the monotheistic mind-set dominated, bringing to an end what some have described as a fragmented, disorderly worldview composed of arbitrary polytheistic powers.⁸ Swearing in the name of family members, however, has not ended, and it continues to be common cultural practice despite prophetic prohibition. Despite being forbidden [*ḥarām*] or strongly discouraged [*karāhatan shadīdah*] to swear by *amānah*, it is common in Iraq and the Middle East to swear by *amānāt Allāh*. In Baghdad, people often swear by *amānat Allāh*, [Allāh’s Honor], *wa Allāh wa amānatuhu*, [By Allāh and Allāh’s Honor], and

amānat Allāh wa Rasūlih [By Allāh's Honor and His Messenger's] (Masliyah 86).

While “[t]he spiritual bases of the pagan beliefs and of the new religion, Islām, diverge widely” they had “one bond...in common--the Arabic language. In both eras, the Arabic language was the creative nucleus around which and from which these two opposed spiritual ideologies grew” (Hottinger 25). It is quite evident that the ocean of Allāh expressions in the Arabic language grew as the result of the rejection of polytheism and as a perpetual reminder and reinforcement of Muḥammad's monotheistic mandate. It would appear that pre-Islāmic Arabic was peppered with aphoristic, proverbial, and idiomatic expressions for every occasion and that, when those became *ḥarām*, a void was created for which the Allāh Lexicon supplied filler.

A relevant side-note to the intense focus on Allāh during the period of transistion between pre-Islāmic times and the advent of Islām concerns the issue of declaration, that is, a declaration of faith in the face of dangerous opposition. While Islām tolerates and even prescribes *taqiyyah*, the dissimulation of one's faith, in times of fear, false conversions to Islām, on the other hand, are condemned.⁹ As Alfred Guillaume explains, “Muslims look with a tolerant eye on a man who conceals his belief through *force majeure*, but to pretend to be a Muslim is a crime” (242). “The hypocrites,” however, “will be in the lowest depths of the Fire; no helper wilt thou find for them” (4:145). The Qur'ānic condemnation of hypocrites (2:8-20; 2:204-206; 3:167-168; 4:60-63; 4:70-73; 4:88-89; 4:141-143; 4:145; 9:64-65; 9:67-69; 58:14-19; 59:11-14) may motivate Muslims to assert their Islāmicity through verbal expressions of faith.¹⁰

3.2 General Sayings

The general sayings encourage, in broad terms, the remembrance of Allāh at all times and places, inwardly and outwardly, mentally and verbally, implicitly and explicitly.¹¹ In Muslim, it is related that the Prophet said that: “Whenever people sit and remember Allāh, the angels surround them, mercy covers them, tranquility descends upon them, and Allāh makes mention of them to His Company [of angels].” In Muslim (d. 875) and Bukhārī (d. 870), he states that: “He who remembers Allāh, and he who does not, are like the living and the dead.”

In Aḥmad (d. 855), he says that the best deed is “To leave the world while your tongue is busy with the remembrance of Allāh.” In the same book, he says that the best people on the Day of Judgment will be “those who remember Allāh greatly.” In Bayhaqī (d. 1066), Allāh’s Messenger says: “For everything there is a polish, and the polish for the hearts is the remembrance of Allāh.” The remembrance of the Almighty is a source of divine love. As the Prophet explains, “He who remembers Allāh much, Allāh loves him,” and he said: “The night that I was enraptured to my Lord I passed by a man extinguished within the light of Allāh’s Throne. I asked, ‘Who is this, and is he an angel?’ I was told ‘No,’ and I asked again, ‘Is it a Prophet?’ I was told ‘No,’ and I said, ‘Who then?’ It was said: ‘This is a man who, while he was in the world, his tongue was constantly mentioning Allāh and his heart was attached to the mosques’” (Ghazālī). Reiterating the Qur’ānic verse in which Allāh says “Remember me and I will remember you,” the Prophet relates that Allāh told him that:

I am for my servant as he thinks of Me and I am with him when he remembers Me, so if he remembers Me in his mind I also remember him in My Mind and if he remembers Me in an assembly I also remember him in an assembly much better than this [ie. in the assembly of angels]. (Bukhārī and Muslim).

He also said that “The men and women who remember Allāh very much” were the best servants and the highest in rank in the eye of Allāh on the Day of Judgement (Aḥmad). Al-Mundhirī (d. 1258) relates in *al-Targhīb wa al-tarhīb* that the Prophet said that: “The one who remembers Allāh among those who forget Him, Allāh shows him his seat in paradise during his life;” “The one who remembers Allāh among those who forget Him is like the fighter behind those who run away;” “The one who remembers Allāh among those who forget Him, Allāh looks at him with a look after which He will never punish him;” “The one who remembers Allāh among those who forget Him is like a light inside a dark house;” “The one remembers Allāh among those who forget Him, Allāh forgives him sins to the amount of every eloquent and non-eloquent speaker,” meaning, the entire number of non-speaking animals and speaking human beings; and “The one

who remembers Allāh in the marketplace, will have light in every hair of his head on the Day of Resurrection.” The Prophet also said: “Remembrance of Allāh is firm knowledge of one’s belief, immunity from hypocrisy, a fortress against Satan, and a guarded refuge from the fire” (Samarqandī qtd. in Ḥaddād). And the remembrance of Allāh is the best of actions, as the Prophet preached:

“Shall I not inform you of the best of your actions, the most pure in the sight of your Master, the one which raises your ranks highest, that which is better for you than giving gold and silver [in charity], and better for you than your meeting your enemies, so that you strike their necks and they strike yours?” The companions urged, “Of course, O Messenger of Allāh! [Inform us!]” He replied, “It is the remembrance of Allāh.” (Abū Dāwūd)

In *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, Ghazālī (d. 1111) reports that the Prophet said that: “One who remembers Allāh among the heedless is like a living tree in the midst of dry ones;” “One who remembers Allāh is like a warrior in His path;” “If anyone wishes to enter the garden of paradise, let him remember Allāh much;” “Fill your tongue with the remembrance of Allāh day and night;” “The remembrance of Allāh in the morning and the evening is better than fighting with a sword in the path of Allāh and giving wealth in charity;” “If a party of men remember Allāh for the pleasure of Allāh a heavenly messenger proclaims: ‘Your sins have been forgiven and you have been given virtues in lieu of your sins.’” According to ‘Ā’ishah, a wife of the Prophet, “The Messenger of Allāh used to remember Allāh, the Great and Majestic, at all moments” (Abū Dāwūd).

3.3 Specific Sayings

The specific sayings in which the Prophet prescribes formulas, expressions and invocations for the purposes of personal piety and for particular occasions are applicable in any conceivable context. These expressions include:

Allāh

Islām clearly rejects the concept that God’s name should be suppressed. As a reaction to the Jewish prohibition of mentioning the name of the Almighty, the Prophet urged his followers to call upon Allāh abundantly and not to be stingy. In fact, according to Islāmic traditions, the absence of the Allāh Lexicon is

one of the signs of the latter days and impending doom. As the Messenger explained, “The Hour will not rise before *Allāh*, *Allāh* is no longer said on earth” (Muslim); and through another chain, “The Hour will not rise on anyone saying: *Allāh*, *Allāh*” (Muslim). For a Muslim, the *Allāh* Lexicon forms part of a spiritual cycle. The very first word Muslim children hear upon birth is *Allāh* as the *adhān* and *iqāmah*, the calls to prayer, are chanted to them; and for the dying, the very best of actions, according to the Prophet, is to “leave the world while reciting the name of *Allāh*” (Aḥmad). Clearly, *Allāh* is the main mantra of Islām.

Yā Allāh / O *Allāh*

Yā Allāh is one of the most common *Allāh* expressions and is particularly prevalent in the prayers of the Prophet, for example, his prayer: “O *Allāh*, guard me from Thy Punishment on the day when thou raisest up thy servants” (Abū Dāwūd). It is also called for prior to having sex, in the formula “O *Allāh*, ward off Satan from us and ward off Satan from what you bestow on us” (Bukhārī). In Arab countries, women in labor use this phrase for strength during the worst of their pains. Clearly, calling upon *Allāh* at such a moment is not the same as yelling out of weakness: rather, it is a demonstration of divine consciousness.

Allāhumma / O *Allāh*

Allāhumma, perhaps the Arabic form of the Hebrew *Elohīm*, is another form of saying “O *Allāh*” and is an oft-utilized anaphora in Muslim prayers. There are many *aḥādīth* citing prayers of the Prophet commencing with *Allāhumma*, including *Allāhumma aslamtu nafsī ilayka* when going to bed, *Allāhumma laka al-ḥamd*, when going to pray, and *labbayk Allāhumma labbayk*, when going to *ḥajj*, among numerous other examples.

Wa Allāh / By *Allāh*

Wa Allāh or “By *Allāh*” is very common as an Islāmic oath. Oaths made to *Allāh* are routine in Arabic and Muslims are reassured that “*Allāh* will not call you into account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts; and he is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (2:115), a Qur’ānic verse interpreted by the Prophet to refer to futile oaths such as “man’s speech in his house: ‘No, by *Allāh*’ and ‘Yes, by *Allāh*’” (Mālik).

The *adhān* / The Call to Prayer

The *adhān*, or the Muslim call to prayer, forms part of the Allāh Lexicon, and contains some of the most common Allāh expressions: *Allāhu Akbar* and *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. It consists of the following standard phrases, with the Sunnī Shī'ite variants noted in brackets:

Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar
Allāh is the Greatest, Allāh is the Greatest
Ashḥadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh
I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh
Ashḥadu an lā ilāha illā Allāh
I bear witness that there is no god but Allāh
Ashḥadu anna Muḥammadun Rasūlu Allāh
I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh
Ashḥadu anna Muḥammadun Rasūlu Allāh
I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh
[*Ashḥadu anna Amīra al-Mu'minīn 'Alīyyun Waliyyu Allāh*]
[I bear witness that the Leader of the Believers, 'Alī, is the Friend of Allāh]
[*Ashḥadu anna Amīra al-Mu'minīn 'Alīyyun Ḥujjat Allāh*]
[I bear witness that the Leader of the Believers, 'Alī is the Proof of Allāh]
Ḥayya 'alā al-ṣalāh, Ḥayya 'alā al-ṣalāh
Come to Prayer, Come to Prayer
Ḥayya 'alā al-falāḥ, Ḥayya 'alā al-falāḥ
Come to Success, Come to Success
[*Ḥayya 'alā khayr al-'amal, Ḥayya 'alā khayr al-'amal*]¹²
[Come to the best of actions, Come to the best of actions]
[*al-ṣalātu khayrun mina al-nawm*]
[Prayer is better than sleep]
[*al-ṣalātu khayrun mina al-nawm*]
[Prayer is better than sleep]¹³
Allāhu Akbar, Allāhu Akbar
Allāh is the Greatest, Allāh is the Greatest
Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Lā ilāha illā Allāh
There is no god but Allāh, [There is no god but Allāh]

Repeated 5 times per day in the Sunnī world and 3 times a day in the Shī'ite world, the daily, weekly, monthly, yearly and lifelong repetition of the call to prayer becomes ingrained into the mind and spirit of Muslims. This is further reinforced by the recommendation to repeat the words of the *adhān* as they are

recited. As the Prophet taught, “When you hear the *adhān* you should repeat the words as the *mu’adhdhin* pronounces them” (Abū Dāwūd).

Lā ilāha illā Allāh / There is no god but Allāh

The *shahādah* or profession of faith, *lā ilāha illā Allāh*, there is no god but Allāh, is the essence of Islām and its first pillar [*rukṇ*]. As William C. Chittick explains, “All else depends upon it and derives from it” (23). According to Farūqī, “*Tawḥīd* is that which gives Islāmic civilization its identity, which binds all of its constituents together and thus makes them an integral, organic body, which we call civilization” (73). The profession of faith is found in the Qur’ān, in the Sunnah, and in supplications. It forms part of the *adhān*, the *iqāmah*, and the ritual prayers. The *shahādah*, the testimony of *tawḥīd*, the act of affirming that Allāh is one, absolute, peerless and without partners is at the very root of what it means to be Muslim. In Islām, faith is pervasive; it is both private and public, and it behooves the believers to testify to their belief in *tawḥīd*.

The *shahādah* is repeated in normal discourse on a daily basis by Muslims. It is used to express awe, surprise, sadness, and a myriad of other emotions. It adorns flags, stationary, mosques and other buildings. It is utilized in business transactions and to assert one’s honesty. When Moroccan vendors count money, they often say: one, there is no god but Allāh; two, and he has no partners: *wāḥid, lā ilāha illā Allāh; juj, lā sharīka lah...* In Egypt, the first part of the *shahādah* forms part of a comical popular song associated with numbers which says *wāḥid, lā ilāha illā Allāh; ithnāyn*, the two grandsons of the Prophet...*arba’ah*, the wives we can have, and so forth.

In Tirmidhī (d. 892), Nasā’ī (d. 915), Ibn Mājah (d. 887), and Ḥākim (d. 1014), the Messenger of Allāh says: “The best remembrance [of Allāh] is [saying] *lā ilāha illā Allāh* [There is no god but Allāh].” In another tradition by Tirmidhī, the Prophet explains that “When a servant of Allāh utters the words *lā ilāha illā Allāh* [there is no god except Allāh] sincerely, the doors of heaven open up for these words until they reach the Throne of Allāh, so long as its utterer keeps away from the major sins” (Tirmidhī and al-Mundhirī). It is also reported that the Prophet said, “Renew your faith.” “How can we renew our faith?” they asked.

The Prophet replied: “Say always: *lā ilāha illā Allāh*” (Aḥmad). The Prophet commanded the emigrant women to be regular in remembering Allāh by saying *tahlīl* [*lā ilāha illā Allāh*], *tasbīḥ* [*subḥāna Allāh*], and *taqdīs* [*Allāhu Akbar*], to never to be forgetful of Allāh and His Mercy, and to count them on their fingers, for the fingers will be questioned and will speak (Aḥmad, Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Ḥākim, Shawkānī, Suyūfī). The Prophet said: “Whoever says: *lā ilāha illā Allāh waḥdahu lā sharīka lah, lahu al-mulku wa lahu al-ḥamd, wa huwwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr*--There is no god but Allāh, alone, without partner. His is the sovereignty, and His the praise, and He has power over everything--a hundred times a day will have a reward equivalent to the reward for freeing ten slaves. In addition, a hundred good deeds will be recorded for him and a hundred bad deeds of his will be wiped off, and it will be a safeguard for him from Satan that day until evening, and no one will be better in deeds than such a person except he who does more than that” (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā’ī and Ibn Mājah). The *shahādah* is also utilized in the following Prophetic prayer used when facing distress: *lā ilāha illā Allāh rabb al-‘arsh al-‘aẓīm; rabbu al-samawāti wa rabbu al-‘arsh al-karīm* [There is no god but Allāh, Lord of the Majestic Throne; Lord of the Skies and Lord of the Noble Throne]. The words *lā ilāha illā Allāh* should be the last words heard and uttered by the dying. As the Prophet taught, “Recite to those who are dying ‘There is no god but Allāh’” (Abū Dāwūd), assuring that “If anyone’s last words are ‘There is no god but Allāh,’ he will enter paradise (Abū Dāwūd).

Considering that *tawḥīd* or the oneness of God is at the epicenter [*wasaf*] of Islām, it comes as no surprise that Muslims have developed many oaths revolving around it. Iraqi Muslims swear by *al-wāḥid wa al-aḥad*, the One and Only; by *al-ḥaqq al-mutajallī bi* or *al-ḥaqq alladhī tajallā bi*, the truth of the One revealed through Oneness; by *tafarrada bi al-waḥdāniyyah*, the One singled out in Oneness; by *alladhī lā ma‘būda siwāh*, by the One who alone is worshipped among a multitude of other manifestations (Masliyah 91-92).

Bismillāh / In the name of Allāh

Despite Theodor Noldeke-Schwally's claim that the *basmalah* was of Jewish origin, Naiki concludes that "we have no convincing evidence that the *basmalah* is the translation of the Hebrew *b'shēm YHWH*" (Naiki 59). He also rejects the idea that the form may be an Arabized version of the Persian *pat nām i Yazdān*, "In the name of God" (59). Following common sense, Naiki concludes that since the invocations *bismi al-Lāt* and *bismi al-'Uzzā* existed during pre-Islāmic times, the *bismillāh* developed in the Arabian Peninsula (60). To be more precise, it first manifested itself in Arabia as part of the Qur'ānic revelation. As Ayātullāh Pooya Yāzdī explains, "*Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* was never before used or known to any of the other creeds of the world" (10). In fact, as late as the 6th year after Hijrah, the Quraysh refused to allow the term *Bismillāh* to be used in the treaty drawn between the Muslims and the Makkans at Ḥudaybiyyah. When Imām 'Alī was summoned by the Prophet to write "In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful," Suhayl ibn 'Amr, the deputy of Quraysh, objected, saying "I do not recognize this" (Ibn Ishāq 504). Ultimately, as a matter of compromise, the term used was *Bismika Allāhumma*, "In thy Name, O Allāh," which was then current among the Quraysh (504). In fact, the Qur'ān itself bears witness that the phrase *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* was totally unknown to the Quraysh, to such an extent that they resented the request to use it. As Almighty Allāh explains: "When it is said to them, 'Prostrate ye before *al-Raḥmān*!'" They say, "And what is *al-Raḥmān*?" Shall we prostrate to that which thou commandest us?" (25:60). Making both Allāh, in the Hijaz, and al-Raḥmān, in the Yamamah, equivalent to one another was a vital step in uniting Arabia under one confessional Islāmic agency (see also 17:110; *basmalah*).

The expression "In the name of Allāh" is recited prior to commencing any action, good or bad. It is even employed by some [less than pious] Muslims prior to consuming alcohol and drugs which is considered a mortal sin in Islām.¹⁴ This remembrance of God in moments of sin is indicative of the Muslim's belief that Allāh is All-Seeing and All-Knowing. Even in evil, Muslims acknowledge their wrong and place their hope in the mercy of the Almighty. For the Muslim, even

the most mundane action has spiritual significance. As Paul Balta explains,

Avant de manger, d'écrire, de travailler, autant d'actes qui sont pour lui sacrés, le bon croyant dit: *Bismillāh*... ["Au nom de Dieu"]. Si la modernité est confondue avec la sécularisation et la perte du sens du sacré, les musulmans la refusent: "Une société qui n'intègre pas le sacré est considérée comme perverse." (90).

[Before eating, writing, working, any act considered as sacred, the good Muslim says: *Bismillāh*... ["In the name of God"]. If modernity is confounded with secularization and the loss of the sense of the sacred, Muslims reject it: "A society which does not integrate what is sacred is considered corrupt."]

As for eating, the Prophet instructed: "Invoke the name of Allāh and eat with your right [hand]" (Muslim). In Abū Dāwūd (d. 817), he asks his followers to "[m]ention Allāh's name, eat with your right hand and eat from what is next to you" (Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Dāwūd). In another tradition, he says "[w]hen any one of you eats, he should invoke the name of Allāh, the Exalted. If he forgets to invoke the name of Allāh, the Exalted, at the beginning, he should say [when he does remember], 'In the name of Allāh, in its beginning and its end' [*Bismillāhi awwalahu wa ākhīrahu*] (Abū Dāwūd and Tirmidhī) and warns them that "[t]he devil considers the food lawful when Allāh's name is not mentioned over it" (Abū Dāwūd). According to Imām al-Ḥasan ibn 'Alī: "It is the duty of every Muslim to have certain manners when he sits down to eat, four of which are obligatory: to know that Allāh is the Provider; to be grateful to Him; to say *bismillāh* when you start to eat; and to praise Allāh for giving you health so that you could eat your food" (qtd. Bostānī 97). Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 765-66) explained that "[w]hen a person says *bismillāh* before drinking and after swallowing a sip says *alḥamdulillāh*, and then drinks another sip starting with *bismillāh* and when finished says *alḥamdullilāh* and repeats the same for a third time, the water which enters his stomach will thank Allāh and the drinker will be rewarded" (qtd. Bostānī 98).

The formula "In the name of Allāh" is recommended when entering one's home, retiring for the evening, and covering foodstuff, as per the following

prophetic instructions: “Shut your door and make mention of Allāh’s name, for the devil does not open a door which has been shut; extinguish your lamp and make mention of Allāh’s name; cover up your vessel even by a piece of wood that you just put on it and make mention of Allāh’s name, and tie your water-skin mentioning Allāh’s name” (Abū Dāwūd). The Prophet further explained: “When a man enters his house and mentions Allāh’s name on entering and on his food, the devil says: ‘You have no place to spend the night and no evening meal,’ but when he enters without mentioning Allāh’s name, on entering the devil says: ‘You have found a place to spend the night,’ and when he does not mention Allāh’s name on his food, he says: ‘You have found a place to spend the night and an evening meal’” (Abū Dāwūd). The Prophet also said that when a man leaves his house he should say “In the name of Allāh, I trust Allāh; there is no might and power but in Allāh” [*Bismillāh, tawakkaltu ‘alā Allāh; Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata ilā bi Allāh*] (Abū Dāwūd).

The formula “In the name of Allāh” is required prior to engaging in lawful sexual relations with one’s wife. As Almighty Allāh says in the Qur’ān, “Your wives are a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will; but do some good act for your soul beforehand” (2:223). The “good act” prior to commencing intimate activity is saying “In the name of Allāh.” If one fails to mention the name of Allāh prior to having sex, Muslims are warned by the Prophet that the activity becomes subject to the will of the devil. As such, the following prophetic prayer is prescribed, “In the name of Allāh. O Allāh, protect us from Satan and also protect what you bestow upon us from Satan” (Bukhārī).

The Qur’ānic formula, “In the name of Allāh” is also said by Muslims “whenever they are setting out on a trip, about to undertake a dangerous task, or beginning a speech. This formula is printed at the top of business letterheads and included at the beginning of reports and personal letters--it even appears on business receipts” (Nydell 88). The *bismillāh* formula is also pronounced upon sleeping, the supplication being, “O Allāh, in your name I die and live” [*Allāhumma bismika amūtu wa ahyā*] (Bukhārī). It is used when slaughtering animals, hunting, and setting out dogs (Abū Dāwūd). “In the name of Allāh” is

the typical header for literature: letters, legal papers, wills, essays, books...¹⁵ Even erotic works like *The Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, Haroun al-Makhzumī's *The Fountains of Pleasure*, and Shaykh Nefzawī's (d. 16th c.) *The Perfumed Garden*, commence with the words "In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful" and draw upon a rich variety of Allāh phrases. Nefzawī's work is especially interesting in its eroticism expressed in words of divine praise.¹⁶ Besides serving as an epithet, the expression *bismillāh* is the most commonly employed in traditional Islāmic medicine. It is also called for when placing a corpse in the grave (Abū Dāwūd). In short, as the Prophet says, "Any activity not begun with the words 'In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful' is severed [from its blessings]" (Ibn Kathīr).

Inshā' Allāh / Allāh willing

As we have seen earlier, the Qur'ān compels Muslims to defer to the Divine when referring to the future.¹⁷ The normative use of the *inshā' Allāh* expression, like any norm, is enforced at an early stage of socialization by Arab Muslim parents (Gregory and Wehba 96). The native Arabic speaker "learns the expression very early in his childhood, and it is learned in the context of religious truth. In other words, God's truth is present in the context of expression-use in the deepest, most religious sense, so it means that truth is present in the social encounter" (102). According to established norm,

the expression is uttered appropriately when one makes any plan for the future. For example, according to Muslim belief, only God has control of knowledge concerning future affairs; therefore, when any kind of human design for the future is made, the expression *inshā' Allāh* must be uttered to show one's deference to God. (95)

Among Arabic Muslims, "No one thinks of making a definite appointment: it is qualified by *inshā' Allāh*" since "[n]othing is inevitable or fixed; all is subject to a Providence before which men are small. However automatic it may be, reference to the deity is good form. Even atheists [and there are some] invoke the Allāh they deny" (Desmond 13). Although "the canonical use of the expression is primarily religious, it is obvious that it is used in other common language contexts in

another way” (Gregory and Wehba 97).

As Moḥammed Farghal has demonstrated in his study, “The Pragmatics of *inshaallāh* in Jordanian Arabic,” the expression has drifted extensively from its semantic import by acquiring a wide spectrum of illocutions, thus becoming a pragmatically multi-purpose expression (253). Farghal has shown that the expression serves as a general discourse marker, functions as a directive, operates as a marker of tag questions, acts as a politeness marker, and works as a mitigator, as an expressive, and even as an apology.

The *inshā’ Allāh* expression, like the rest of the Allāh Lexicon, is problematic for outsiders, that is, all those who are not Arabic-speaking Muslims, even those who belong to the community of believers or the *ummah*. Research conducted by Gregory and Wehba encountered

a differential interpretation in comparing the meaning of the expression as used by the native speaker...and the foreigner... Egyptians use the term between themselves and transmit a meaning which is very different from the foreign version, and this is the source of some of the difficulties with the expression on an intercultural basis. Use of the expression intraculturally between foreigners from Western type cultures has taken on the meaning of something like *maybe* [with a low probability] *I’ll come*, *inshā’ Allāh*, which according to Egyptian informants is an incorrect use of the expression. (103)

The expression can also be used pejoratively which can be confusing to the non-native speaker of Arabic (Farghal 255). In whatever way it is employed, *inshā’ Allāh* is the hallmark of Arabs, regardless of where they come from and/or what dialect they speak (268).

Allāhu Akbar / Allāh is the Greatest

The *takbīr* or saying of *Allāhu Akbar*, namely, that Allāh is the Greatest, is one of the slogans of Islām,¹⁸ applicable to numerous situations, from expressions of awe to battle cries during *jihād* or sacred struggles. In Aḥmad (d. 855), Abū Dāwūd (d. 817) and Tirmidhī (d. 892), the Prophet says: “Gabriel came to me and commanded me to order my Companions to raise their voices in *takbīr*.” According to the sixth Shī‘ite Imām, the expression *Allāh Akbar* is also said when

admiring something in order to avert the evil eye (Ispahany 158-59).

A 'ūdhu billāh / I Seek Refuge in Allāh

The seeking of refuge in Allāh is required prior to reciting the Qur'ān, in moments of fear, and when exposed to evil. At times it is specific, as in "I take refuge in Allāh from Satan the Rejected," and at times more general as in the prophetic prayer "O Allāh, I seek refuge from you from all kinds of evil" (Bukhārī and Muslim). It is also recommended when entering the washroom in the form, "O Allāh, I seek refuge in You from all kinds of evil" *Allāhumma inni a'ūdhu bika mina al-khubthi wa al-khabā'ith*] (Bukhārī and Muslim). The Prophet also taught Muslims to take refuge in Allāh as protection from being misers, laziness, the anti-Christ, cowardice, old age, debt, overpowering afflictions, the difficulties of life and death, sin, epidemics, diseases, hell fire, wealth and poverty, as well as to increase guidance, when performing ablutions, and so forth. If someone requests refuge for the sake of Allāh, it is incumbent on Muslims to comply. As the Messenger explained, "If anyone asks for refuge for the sake of Allāh, give him refuge; and if anyone asks you [for something] for the pleasure of Allāh, give him" (Abū Dāwūd). The expression "I take refuge in Allāh" is extensively used in Islāmic medicine.

Alḥamdulillāh / Praise be to Allāh and Yarḥam Allāh / May Allāh have Mercy

The Prophet recommended people to say *alḥamdulillāh* at all times. It is said when getting dressed, "He who puts on clothes should say 'Praise be to Allāh'" (Abū Dāwūd). It is obligatory for Muslims to praise God after eating. The Prophet himself used to say "Praise be to Allāh, who gave us to eat and to drink and made us Muslims" [*alḥamdulillāhi alladhī aṭ'amanā wa saqānā wa ja'alanā muslimīn*] (Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī). *Alḥamdulillāh* should also be said upon sneezing. As the Prophet said: "Invoke a blessing on the one who sneezes" (Abū Dāwūd). He further explained: "When someone sneezes, he should say 'Praise be to Allāh,' and his brother should respond 'Allāh have mercy on you.' When he says, 'Allāh have mercy on you,' he should reply, 'Allāh guide you and better your affairs'" [*yahdīkumu Allāhu wa yusliḥ bālakum*] (Bukhārī).¹⁹

There are several traditions in which the Prophet blessed people [*tashmū*] who sneezed (Bukhārī). In one case, when two people sneezed, he only blessed the one who praised Allāh (Bukhārī). He explained that “Allāh likes sneezing and dislikes yawning, so if someone sneezes and then praises Allāh, then it is obligatory on every Muslim who hears him to say, ‘May Allāh have mercy on you’” (Bukhārī). The Jews, who were opposed to his prophecy, used to sneeze in the presence of the Prophet, hoping that he would say “Allāh have mercy on you!” but he would always say “May Allāh guide you and grant you well-being!” (Abū Dāwūd). The Prophet also used the prayer “Praise be to Allāh who gives us life after death and unto Him is the return” [*alḥamdulillāh alladhi aḥyānā ba‘da mā amātanā wa ilayhi al-nushūr*].

The expression, “Praise be to Allāh” is also recommended when seeing the new moon, when going out, and when returning home (Abū Dāwūd). As a general endorsement and encouragement for praising Allāh, it is reported that the Prophet said: “The best prayer is *alḥamdulillāh*” (Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim) and warned that “Every important matter which is not begun by an expression of praise to Allāh is maimed” (Abū Dāwūd). While the Arabic *alḥamdulillāh*

seems quite similar to the English thank you...it is conventionally used in ways in which the English expression is not; it can function as a response to an enquiry after one’s health, to indicate that all is well, or as an indication that one has finished eating, to decline an offer of more food by an over-zealous host. (Davies 83)

Along with *bismillāh*, *alḥamdulillāh* is among the first formulas learned by Muslim children. These religious formulas of reverence are far more stressed by parents than those for requesting and thanking people.

Raḥima Allāh / May Allāh have mercy

The expression *Raḥima Allāh* or “May Allāh have mercy upon...” occurs in many prophetic traditions invoking mercy upon those who do good deeds. This includes the Prophet’s saying, “May Allāh have mercy upon the man who is generous while selling, buying and making a demand [of his balance from the people]” (Bukhārī). The invocation is also used when a deceased person is

mentioned, much like “rest in peace” but with a clearly religious sense devoid in the English. In Islām, “peace be upon him” is limited to prophets and, for Shī‘ites, Imāms; *raḍiyya Allāhu ‘anhum*, “May Allāh be pleased with them,” is used for Companions of the Prophet and *raḥima Allāh* is used for ordinary mortals.

Al-salāmu ‘alaykum / Peace be upon you

While the greeting *al-salāmu ‘alaykum* may fall outside the Allāh Lexicon when used in the general sense of “May peace be upon you,” it merits inclusion as it can imply “May the peace [of Allāh] be upon you” or mean quite directly “May Peace be with you” in the sense that *al-Salām*, the Peace, is a Divine Attribute of Allāh. In fact, some Arabic speakers insert *Allāh* into the peace greeting, saying *al-salāmu Allāh ‘alaykum* to specify this intention. A variant “goodbye” in Arabic is *ma‘a sallāmah* or *bi al-sallāmah* [(go) in peace and safety], the response to which is *Allāhi yusallmak* [(May) Allāh give you safety]. The *taslīm*, the saying of *salām*, is also a part of the ritual prayer in the form of *al-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuha al-nabī* or “Peace be upon you o Prophet” which is part of the Allāh Lexicon, for praising the Prophet is praising Allāh (Qur’ān 33:7). It should be noted that a living person is usually addressed by the plural form *al-salāmu ‘alaykum* as one is addressing both the person and his/her guardian angels. The singular form, *al-salāmu ‘alayka* or *al-salāmu alayki*, is used to send one’s salutations to a deceased person.

The Prophet said, “The first person to greet is the best in the eyes of Allāh and His Messenger” (qtd. Bostānī 95); “The laziest of people is the one who does not...greet;” (96) “The cheapest of people is the one who does not greet” (96) and “One who leaves a gathering after sending a greeting, deserves any reward sent upon those who remain after his departure” (96); “whoever greets you with the formula *al-salāmu ‘alaykum* will be rewarded ten times. Whoever greets you with the formula *al-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuhu* will be rewarded thirty times” (96). The Prophet said: “Do not respond to a person who speaks to you until he has greeted you appropriately” (95). He also said, “Whoever visits you and does not greet you, do not offer him food until he greets you” (95). According to Imām Ja‘far al-Šādiq, “One of the signs of humility from a Muslim

is that he greets everyone he meets” (95).

The goal of the *salām* greeting is evident: to foster fraternity and good will among Muslims.²⁰ The Prophet explained, “You will not enter paradise until you have faith and you will not have faith until you love for your brother what you love for yourself. May I not direct you to a thing whereby you will love one another? Disseminate the practice of saying ‘Peace be upon you’ amongst yourselves” (Muslim). Social harmony was encouraged through such teachings as “Eat together, and do not separate, for the blessing is in the company” (Ibn Mājah). With social welfare in mind, the Prophet encouraged Muslims to greet each other with words of peace and to shake hands, for as he explained: “The best [way] of greeting is shaking hands” (Aḥmad and Tirmidhī); and “The two Muslims who meet and shake hands with each other are forgiven before they separate” (Aḥmad). The Prophet also used to greet children as he passed them by (Bukhārī and Muslim). While Arab culture considers it inappropriate or offensive for men to address non-*maḥram* [unrelated] women, it is reported by Imām Aḥmad (d. 855) and al-Kulaynī (d. 941?) that the Prophet was in the practice of sending his *salām* to women as he passed them.²¹ Even Imām ‘Alī (d. 661) used to salute women, avoiding only adolescent girls for fear of being flirtatious.²² Almighty Allāh describes the *salām* as the greeting of the inhabitants of paradise (7:46; 10:10; 14:23; 36:58). Clearly, the centrality of the *salām* salutation illustrates that peace, not violence, is the essence of Islām.

Astaghfirullāh / I ask forgiveness from Allāh

The Prophet encouraged *tawbah*, repentance to Allāh, via the supplication, *astaghfirullāh* or “I ask forgiveness from Allāh.” The Prophet himself, despite being *ma’sūm*, or divinely protected from sin, according to the general consensus of Sunnī and Shī‘ite scholars, repeatedly repented to Allāh.²³ He swore that, “By Allāh, I ask Allāh’s forgiveness and turn to him in repentance more than seventy times a day” (Bukhārī). The grace of God and the mercy of Islām are manifest in the sacred *ḥadīth* where Almighty Allāh says:

O Son of Adam, whatever you asked Me and expect from Me I forgave -- respecting that which you owed to Me--and I don't care [how great this was]. O Son of Adam, even if your sins pile up to the sky and then you seek My forgiveness I will forgive you, and O Son of Adam, even if you have an earthful of sins but you meet Me without associating any other thing with Me I will forgive you. (Tirmidhī)

While prayers like *astaghfirullāh* may become formulaic, the Imāms from the Household of the Prophet stressed the importance of saying such things with sincerity.²⁴ One particularly poignant example relates Imām ‘Alī’s (d. 661) reaction to a fellow Muslim who was repeating *astaghfirullāh* without taking into careful consideration what these words actually mean. The Imām said:

Do you know what *istighfār* [asking forgiveness] is? *Istighfār* is meant for people of a high position. It is a word that stands on six supports. The first is to repent over the past; the second is to make a firm determination never to revert to it; the third is to discharge all the rights of people so that you may meet Allāh quite clean with nothing to account for: the fourth is to fulfill every obligation which you ignored [in the past] so that you may now do justice with it; the fifth is to aim at the flesh grown as a result of unlawful earning, so that you may melt it by grief [of repentance] till the skin touches the bones and a new flesh grows between them; and the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you [previously] made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. On such an occasion you may say *astaghfirullāh*. (665)

As the Prophet explained, sincerity and constancy are the keys to opening the doors of divine grace. As he explains, “If one supplicates without fail for forgiveness from Allāh, He finds a way out for him to get out of every distress and difficulty, and gives him sustenance through ways utterly unthought of” (Abū Dāwūd, Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim).

Jazāka Allāhu khayran / Allāh will reward you well

Rather than using a simple *shukran* or thank you, which is devoid of deference to the divine, the Prophet taught that “When someone does you good and you say ‘Allāh will reward you well’ to the person, you have done the utmost in praise” (Tirmidhī). In other words, the greatest way to thank people is to call upon God to reward them.

Subhāna Allāh / Glory be to Allāh

The expression *subhāna Allāh*, or Glory be to Allāh, is prevalent in supplications and forms part of the ritual *ṣalāh* [prayer] in the form of *subhāna Allāh* or *subhāna rabbīya al-a'lā* [*wa bi ḥamdih*] or “Glory be to my Lord Allāh, the Most High, and to Him is the praise” and *subhāna rabbīya al-‘aẓīm* [*wa bi ḥamdih*] or “Glory be to my Lord Allāh, the Mighty.” According to the Prophet, “There are two phrases that are light on the tongue but heavy on the scale of rewards and are dear to the Gracious One. These are: *subhāna Allāh wa bi ḥamdihi*, ‘Glory be to Allāh and to Him is the Praise,’ and *subhāna Allāh al-‘aẓīm*, ‘Glory be to Allāh, the Glorious’” (Bukhārī, Muslim, and Tirmidhī). The Prophet said: “I love repeating: *subhāna Allāh, wa alḥamdulillāh, wa lā ilāha illā Allāh, wa Allāhu Akbar* [Glory be to Allāh, and Praise be to Allāh, and There is no god but Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest,’ more than all that the sun shines upon’ (Muslim and Tirmidhī). The Prophet said: “Shall I tell you the words that Allāh loves the most?” I said: “Yes, tell me, O Messenger of Allāh.” He said: “The words dearest to Allāh are: *subhāna Allāh wa bi ḥamdihi*” [Glory be to Allāh and to Him is the praise] (Muslim and Tirmidhī). In Tirmidhī’s (d. 892) version, we also find the following: “The words dearest to Allāh which He has chosen for His angels are: *subhāna rabbī wa bi ḥamdihi*, ‘Glory be to my Lord and to Him is the praise.’” The Prophet said: “Whoever says: ‘Glory be to Allāh, the Great, and to Him is the praise’ will have a palm tree planted for him in paradise” (Tirmidhī). The Prophet said: “Perform enduring good deeds [*al-bāqiyyāt al-ṣālihāt*] more frequently.” They asked, “What are these enduring good deeds?” The Prophet replied: “*Takbīr* [*Allāhu Akbar*], *tahlīl* [*lā ilāha illā Allāh*], *tasbīḥ* [*subhāna Allāh*], *alḥamdulillāh*, and *lā hawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh*” (Nasā’ī and Ḥākim). The Prophet said:

During the Night Journey I met Ibrāhīm who said to me: ‘O Muḥammad, convey my greetings to your Community, and tell them that the paradise is of pure land, its water is sweet, and its expanse is vast, spacious and even. And its seedlings are: *subhāna Allāh* [Glory to Allāh] *wa alḥamdulillāh* [and Praise to Allāh] *wa lā ilāha illā Allāh* [and there is no god but Allāh] *wa Allāhu Akbar* [and Allāh is the Greatest].’

Tirmidhī (d. 892) and Ṭabarānī's (d. 971) version adds "There is no power nor strength, save through Allāh." The Prophet said: "The dearest phrases to Allāh are four: *subḥana Allāh, wa alḥamdulillāh, wa lā ilāha illā Allāh, wa Allāhu Akbar*" [Glory be to Allāh, and Praise be to Allāh, and There is no god but Allāh, and Allāh is the Greatest] (Muslim). In the version of Bukhārī (d. 870), Muslim (d. 875), Tirmidhī (d. 892), and Nasā'ī (d. 915), we find this addition: "Whoever says: *subḥāna Allāh wa bi ḥamdih*-Glorified is Allāh with all praise to Him--a hundred times during a day, will have all his sins wiped off even if they were as numerous as the foam on the surface of the sea."

Al-shukrulillāh or Shukranlillāh / Thank you Allāh

Rather than a simple secular *shukran* or "thanks," many observant Muslims express thanks by saying *jazāka Allāhu khayran*, "Allāh will reward you well," *bāraka Allāhu fīk*, "May Allāh bless you" or *shukran wa al-shukrulillāh*, "Thank you and thank Allāh," following the guidance of the Prophet who teaches that "He who does not thank Allāh does not thank people" (Abū Dāwūd).

Innā lillāhi / From Allāh we come

Innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn, from Allāh we come and to Him is our return, is a Qur'ānic verse which is recited upon the mention of death (2:156). The Prophet taught his followers to say "From Allāh we come and to Him is our return" upon hearing of the passing of a person (Mālik).

Māshā' Allāh / It is Allāh's Will

The expression *māshā' Allāh*, it is the will of Allāh, is used when witnessing an event of astonishment or general favor, and unlike *alḥamdulillāh* is never used or said for bad events. It may be expressed upon seeing a person who is ill or handicapped. It may also be used sarcastically when referring to someone who is acting a fool with the sense of "Poor sap" or "You poor idiot." When meeting a person's small child, etiquette calls for praise carefully mixed with blessings, including "May Allāh keep him" or "This is what Allāh wills," reassuring parents that there is no envy (Nydell 121).

La'nat Allāh 'alā.../ May Allāh's curse be upon...

While the Allāh Lexicon is overwhelmingly positive, it does include a considerable body of curses, including *la'nat Allāh 'alā*, “May Allāh's curse be upon,” and *khadhala Allāh*, “May Allāh forsake,” among many others.²⁵ Muslim scholars are divided as to the legality of cursing in Islām. Those who oppose it point to traditions such as “Do not invoke Allāh's curse, Allāh's anger or hell” (Abū Dāwūd), the Prophet's refusal to curse the Makkan unbelievers with the words “I came as a mercy to mankind” (Muslim), which alludes to chapter 21, verse 7, of the Holy Qur'ān, and the following tradition:

Verily when a servant curses a thing, the curse rises up to Heaven and the doors of Heaven are closed before it, then it falls down to earth and its doors are also closed, then it goes to the right side, and afterwards to the left side but when it does not find a place of entrance, it returns to him who is cursed, and if he deserves that [it falls upon him], otherwise, it returns to the one who curses. (Abū Dāwūd)

Those who endorse cursing point not only to traditions, but to the Holy Qur'ān itself which presents the damning of infidels, hypocrites and apostates as a godly act. As Almighty Allāh explains,

In this world We made a curse to follow them: and on the Day of Judgment they will be among the loathed [and despised] (28:42); Those who reject faith, and die rejecting, on them is Allāh's curse, and the curse of angels, and of all mankind (2:161); How shall Allāh guide those who reject faith after they accepted it and bore witness that the Messenger was true and that clear signs had come unto them? But Allāh guides not a people unjust. Of such the reward is that on them [rests] the curse of Allāh, of His angels, and of all mankind (3:86).

The expression *ahlik* or “Make them perish” is also fairly common in the Qur'ān and is mainly applied to wrongdoers in general, rather than being more specifically aimed at blasphemers and polytheists, as *la'ana* [to curse] and *khadhala* [to forsake] are (Christie 262).

In the books of *ḥadīth*, there are many examples of Allāh, the Prophet and the angels cursing evil-doers. In Tirmidhī (d. 892) we read that the Most Noble Messenger cursed [*la'ana*] ten persons in the case of wine: the one who extracted the juice, the one who demanded its extraction, the one who drank it, the one who carried it, the one to whom it was carried, the one who served it, the one who sold it, the one who used its income, as well as its buyer and seller. In Muslim (d. 875), he cursed [*la'ana*] the person who took interest, who gave interest, who kept a record of it and who bore witness to it. In Ibn Mājah (d. 887), the Prophet says that if a person sells something defective without informing the purchaser he remains under the anger of Allāh and the angels curse him [*tal'anuhu*] incessantly. In this same book, the Messenger of Allāh says that the person who hoards commodities is cursed [*mal'un*]. He also cursed sodomites, catamites, lesbians, zoophiles, cuckolds, transvestites, tyrants and oppressors, alcoholics, women who do not observe Islāmic modest dress and men who allow their women folk to go out in public without *ḥijāb*, among hundreds of others.²⁶ In all such instances, the phrase “Cursed...” serves as a rhetorical device like the formulaic “Blessed are those...”

In a document described by al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), which was drafted by al-Mu'taḍid as an exhortation against Umayyad sympathies, it is stated that *La'anahum Allāh... 'alā lisān al-nabī*, “God cursed them...by the words of the Prophet,” and that upon seeing Abū Sufyān riding a donkey driven by Mu'āwiyah and Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah, Muḥammad said, *La'ana Allāhu al-qā'id wa al-rākib wa al-sā'iq*, “May Allāh curse the leader, the rider and the driver” (Ṭabarī 2170). All of these invocations find their roots in the Qur'ān.

There are an ample number of curses in the Shī'ite Sunnah. Some of these are curses directed to wicked people in general, such as Imām 'Alī's (d. 661) saying that “Allāh has cursed the corrupt, the corrupter, and the one who incites corruption” (qtd. Bostānī); others are specific, targeting the enemies of *Ahl al-Bayt* such as those who massacred Imām Ḥusayn (d. 680), the grandson of the Prophet, along with his family and friends. According to Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq,

Whoever remembers the thirst of Ḥusayn while drinking water and curses those who martyred him will receive one hundred thousand blessings, one hundred thousand of his sins will be forgiven, his rank will be raised one hundred thousand times in paradise and Allāh will resurrect him with a radiant countenance. (qtd. Bostānī 99)

In light of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, a general prohibition against cursing cannot even be considered. Rather, the legality or illegality of cursing in Islām depends on its context: on who is being cursed and for what reason. Indiscriminate cursing is clearly condemned by Allāh and His Messenger as seen in the aforementioned verses and traditions. The cursing of inveterate and unrepentant evil-doers as well as violently hostile enemies of Islām clearly comes across as a godly act in the holy book and the *aḥādīth*.

After the demise of the Prophet, a certain amount of cursing, both formal and informal, did take place. Al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) cites cases where individuals were formally cursed [using *la'ana*, to curse] by the Caliph and their formal cursing from the pulpit of mosques (2048). One particularly abominable act was the Ummayyad practice of cursing Imām 'Alī (d. 661) and his family from the pulpit and having soldiers kill any Muslim who refused to do so (Jordac 290-91; 310-312; Tijanī 177, 231).²⁷

At the time of the Crusades, there were cases of Muslim writers, such as the Damascene jurist 'Alī ibn Ṭāhir al-Sulāmī in his *Kitāb al-jihād*, who appear to have coined new modes of expression such as *ahlakahum Allāh*, "May Allāh make them perish," and *mahlikahum ajma'in*, "May Allāh quickly bring about their total destruction" (Christie 255). The verb's root is the second most common curse in the Qur'ān, but is only used in varying forms three times throughout the entire scripture (25:29; 17:22; 3:160) (260). Despite its Qur'ānic origin, this particular curse "failed to catch on" (Christie 255). Muslim writers also used the invocation *qabbahahum Allāh*, "May Allāh reject them as being repugnant," which comes from a Qur'ānic reference to the Pharaoh and his followers who opposed Moses (28:42). In the early period of the Crusades, it remains the least common expression of the three. As Christie explains,

It can only be assumed that since its root only occurs once in the Qur'ān, it sprang less readily to the minds of writers than did the other two expressions. In addition, as the original Qur'ānic reference is to removal on the Day of Judgment, rather than in the near future, this made it less popular than the more immediate *khadhalahum Allāh*, "May Allāh forsake them" (262).

In Ibn al-Qalanisī's chronicle, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, he curses the Franks in a similar style, saying *wa Allāhu ta'ālā yuḥsinu al-idhlāla minhum wa yaj'alu al-bawāra 'alayhim*, "May Allāh do good by granting victory over them, and quickly bring about ruin and destruction upon them" (256). Be it *khadhalahum Allāh*, "may Allāh forsake them," *la'anahum Allāh*, "May Allāh curse them," or *qabbahahum Allāhu*, "May Allāh make them repugnant," the roots of the verbs *khadhala* [to forsake], *la'ana* [to curse] and *qabbaha* [to reject as repugnant] are all present in the Qur'ān and "[i]t is reasonable to assume that anyone writing during the period [of the Crusades] would have a reasonable knowledge of the Qur'ān" (Chritie 258). Of these three most common curses, "by far the most common root is that of the verb *la'ana* [to curse], and this is the verb which is used most commonly for suffixed invocations" (258-59). The majority of later writers preferred *la'ana*, "to curse," as opposed to *khadhala*, "to forsake" (261). Eventually, as relations improved between the Muslims and the Franks, it may be that writers began to think less about the meanings of the invocations they were using, and so they became a 'label' (261).

In contemporary times, we find an abundance of curses being used throughout the Arabic Islāmic world. While some of these are sanctioned by the Scripture and the Sunnah, the vast majority of them fall into the category of forbidden phrases. These include the expressions of colloquial or regional usage *an'al dīnak* [or more commonly *Allāh yan'al dīnak*], "May Allāh curse your religion," *ishtawā madhhabak*, "May your faith be grilled," *abēl ibdīnka*, "Damn your religion;" and *inn'al-rabbak*, "May your Lord be cursed," all of which are often used (Masliyah 2001: 288)--mainly in Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Palestine. Besides these few examples of cursing God and religion, the Arabic language contains curses and insults attacking one's honor, curses and insults pertaining to

health; curses against property, curses involving bodily defects and professions; curses and insults employing animals, curses against parents, curses wishing death, curses and insults directed against plants and inanimate objects, curses and insults against bodily parts, curses borrowed from other languages, and a handful of curses against the honor of non-Muslims and people of different origin, all of which fall into the category of forbidden or *ḥarām* curses.

The origin of these evil oaths is as yet unclear. According to Masliyah, “the majority of Iraqi Arabic curses show traits of Biblical maledictions as far as motifs, purport, and significance are concerned” (2001: 308). In his view, such curses are part and parcel of Semitic culture and were retained from pre-Islāmic times. According to ‘Abd el-Jawād,

Swearing in Arabic has evolved “degeneratively” or has undergone “semantic bleaching or derogation” both qualitatively and quantitatively. Out of what is supposed to be the formal and sacred oath which is religiously restricted in quality [not to swear by anything other than the Almighty Allāh and quantitatively [to refrain from swearing and making Allāh the frequent object of their oaths] evolved the current practice of very frequent swearing not only by Allāh but also by persons, objects, values, etc., thus violating the restrictions of quality and quantity. *In many aspects, speakers seem to have retained or reintroduced the pre-Islāmic practices.* [The emphasis is ours] (239)

Despite the fact that these condemned curses employ the name Allāh, they are the antithesis of Islām and form part of a counter-tradition.²⁸

The *Ṣalawāt* or Prayers for the Prophet

According to the Holy Qur’ān, “Allāh and his Angels send blessings on the Prophet: O Ye that believe! Send ye blessings on him, and salute him with respect” (33:7). When the Muslims asked Muḥammad “How are we to salute you?” he replied: “Say: ‘O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad’” (Bukhārī and Muslim). In the Sunnah, the Prophet told his followers that “When you hear the *mu’adhdhin*, repeat what he says, invoke a blessing on me, for everyone who invokes a blessing on me will receive ten blessings from Allāh” (Abū Dāwūd). When asked how Muslims should bless him, Muḥammad

told them to say *Allāhumma ṣallī ‘alā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Muḥammad* [O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and the Family of Muḥammad]. The Prophet said: “If people sit in an assembly in which they do not remember Allāh nor invoke a blessing on the Prophet, it will be a cause of grief for them on the Day of Judgment” (Tirmidhī).

The Prayer Beads: The *Tasbīḥ*, *Masbahah* and *Sibḥah*

While some people have attempted to argue that the prayer beads are an innovation or *bid‘ah* in Islām, the use of the rosary for the purpose of remembering Allāh is clearly documented in the Ḥadīth literature.²⁹ Sa‘d ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, for example, reported that once the Prophet saw a woman who had some date-stones or pebbles which she was using as beads to glorify Allāh. The Prophet said to her, “Let me tell you something which would be easier or more excellent for you than that.” So he prescribed her a lengthy *dhikr*:

subḥāna Allāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-samā’,
subḥāna Allāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-arḍ,
subḥāna Allāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa bayna dhālik,
subḥāna Allāhi ‘adada mā huwa khāliq,
Allāhu Akbaru ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-samā’,
Allāhu Akbaru ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-arḍ,
Allāhu Akbaru ‘adada mā khalaqa bayna dhālik,
Allāhu Akbaru ‘adada mā huwa khāliq,
alḥamdulillāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-samā’,
alḥamdulillāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-arḍ,
alḥamdulillāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa bayna dhālik,
alḥamdulillāhi ‘adada mā huwa khāliq,
lā ilāha illā Allāh ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-samā’,
lā ilāha illā Allāh ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-arḍ,
lā ilāha illā Allāh ‘adada mā khalaqa bayna dhālik,
lā ilāha illā Allāh ‘adada mā huwa khāliq,
lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-samā’,
lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa fī al-arḍ,
lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāhi ‘adada mā khalaqa bayna dhālik,
lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāhi ‘adada mā huwa khāliq.

[Glory be to Allāh as many times as the number of what He has created in Heaven / Glory be to Allāh as many times as the number of what He has created on Earth / Glory be to Allāh as many times as the number of what He has created between them / Glory be to Allāh as many times as the number of that which He is creating. The above is repeated four times substituting “Glory be to Allāh” by “Allāh is the Greatest” in the first repetition, “Praise be to Allāh” in the second repetition, “There is no god but Allāh” in the third repetition, and “There is no might or power except Allāh” in the fourth repetition.]

(Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Nasā’ī, and Ḥākim)

Ṣafīyyah bint Ḥuyayy, the Prophet's wife, said: “The Prophet came in to see me and in front of me there were four thousand date-stones with which I was making *tasbīḥ*” [counting *subḥāna Allāh*]. He said: “You make *tasbīḥ* with so many! Shall I teach you what surpasses your number of *tasbīḥ*?” She said: “Teach me!” He said: “Say: *Subḥāna Allāh ‘adada khalqihī*--Glory to Allāh the number of His creation” (Tirmidhī, Ḥakīm and Suyūṭī).

In the Holy Qur’ān, Allāh tells the Prophet to “Remind people, for reminding benefits them.” The reminder of Muslims has various forms, public and private. A public form of this reminder is the *adhān*. The prayer-beads, known in Arabic as *masbaḥah*, *sibḥah* and *tasbīḥ*, were employed by the Companions of the Prophet as an act of private remembrance. It is for that reason that the *tasbīḥ* was called by them *mudhakkir* or *mudhakkirah*--“reminder,” and there is a narration traced to the Prophet wherein he said: *nī ‘ma al-mudhakkir al-sibḥah*: “What a good reminder are the prayer-beads!” Shawkānī (d. 1839) narrates it from ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (d. 661) as evidence for the usefulness of prayer-beads in *Nayl al-awtār* (2:317) from Daylamī’s (d. 1115) narration in *Musnad al-fīrdaws* and Suyūṭī (d. 1505) cites it in his *fatwā* [edict/ruling] on prayer-beads in *al-Hāwī li al-fatāwī* (2:38). Al-Daylamī narrates in *Musnad al-fīrdaws* through Zaynab bint Sulaymān ibn ‘Alī, and from Umm al-Ḥasan bint Ja’far from her father, from her grandfather, from ‘Alī, and it is traced back to the Prophet: “What a good reminder are the prayer-beads!”

Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh / There is no might or power save Allāh

The expression “There is no might or power save Allāh” was described by the Prophet as a jewel from the throne of paradise (Bukhārī, Muslim, and Ghazālī). The Prophet said, “When a man utters at the time of his death that ‘there is no might or power save Allāh,’ the fire of hell will not touch him” (Ghazālī).

al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā / The Most Beautiful Names of Allāh

The ninety-nine names of Allāh which appear in the Holy Qur’ān constitute an important part of the Allāh Lexicon. As we read in the Qur’ān, “Call upon Allāh, or call upon Raḥmān, by whatever ye call Upon Him [it is well]: for to Him belong the most beautiful names” (17:110).³⁰ There are numerous traditions in which the Prophet refers to the divine attributes, including: “Allāh is *al-Jamīl* [the Beautiful] and loves beauty” (Muslim).³¹ It is related by the Prophet that “Allāh has ninety-nine names, one hundred less one; and he who memorizes them all by heart will enter paradise” (Bukhārī). With such a prophetic promise in mind, it is common practice, particularly among the Ṣūfīs, to chant the most beautiful names of Allāh in unison during religious gatherings. In Iraq, people swear by Allāh’s most beautiful names, *wa haqq asmā’ Allāhī al-ḥusnā* (Masliyah 89); by *al-Muhlik al-Mudrik*, the Destroyer, the Annihilator; by *al-Muḥyī al-Mumīt*, the One who revives the dead and causes death; by *alladhī yuḥyī al-‘izām*, the Reviver of Bones; by *al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm*, the Living, the Eternal; by *alladhī yaqdir ‘alā kull shay’*, the One who is able to do all things; by *al-Sāmi’*; by *al-‘Alīm*, the Hearer, the Omniscient; by *Allāh al-‘Azīz*, by Allāh, the Most Powerful; and by *Rabb al-‘izzah*, the Lord of Power; by *Jalāl Allāh*, the Might of Allāh; by *Rabb al-samāwāti wa al-arḍ*, the Lord of the heavens and the earth (90). Arabic-speaking Muslims employ the most beautiful names of Allāh in various circumstances: *Yā Laṭīf* [O Most Gracious] is typically used to express grief or fear; *Yā Raḥmān* [O Most Compassionate] and *Yā Raḥīm* [O Most Merciful] are typically used to implore mercy from the Almighty; *Yā Razzāq* [O Provider of Sustenance] is typically used when asking for sustenance and so forth.

Almighty Allāh is called upon with such frequency that even these ninety-nine names do not suffice. In fact, religious leaders, led by their love for Allāh,

have made use of further divine names and descriptions, both implied and from the holy book. For Shī'ites, the foremost of these authors are the Imāms from the Household of the Prophet. This is particularly the case with al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī (d. 680) and his son 'Alī Zayn al-'Ābidīn (d. 710?), who left us poignant testimonies to their sublime spirituality and divine devotion. The development of divine attributes was not merely the domain of the divines. Even average Arabic-speaking Muslims coined divine attributes which are not found among the beautiful names of Allāh mentioned in the Qur'ān including, for example, the Andalusian inscription *Lā ghālib illā Allāh*, there is no Conqueror but Allāh, which adorns many structures from al-Andalus or "Islāmic Spain."³² The most beautiful names are commonly used as personal names preceded by the word 'Abd, which means servant or slave, as encouraged by the following words of the Prophet, "Verily, the names most liked by Allāh are 'Abd Allāh and 'Abd al-Raḥmān" (Muslim). Regardless of where they live, most Muslims, be they Arabs or non-Arabs, bear Arabic names related to religion.³³

In the previous pages, we have covered some of the major Allāh expressions. Evidently, the list we have provided can in no means be considered exhaustive as entire dictionaries or even encyclopedias would be required to adequately document the richness of the Allāh Lexicon. The Allāh expressions we have included establish a clear link between the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and the Allāh Lexicon and demonstrate the depth of the Islāmic impact on Arabic identity, the issue we will now examine.

4. The Allāh Lexicon and Identity

4.1 The Arabic Language and Identity

The Arabic language, the root of Islāmic identity, is divided into two main varieties: classical or Modern Standard Arabic, the high variety, and colloquial Arabic, the low variety. Classical Arabic, known as *fuṣḥat al-turāth*, is the traditional religious language used by Muslim scholars. It is the language of the Qur'ān, static, frozen in time, and artificially maintained by the 'ulamā'. Modern Standard Arabic, known as *fuṣḥā al-'aṣr*, is the language of the educated elite. Based on classical Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic is a living literary language

which includes some simplified grammatical forms for example, dropping the distinction between the two preterites and includes a modernized lexicon. With the exception of some minor differences in pronunciation, MSA is consistent throughout the Arabic world. Colloquial Arabic, known as *al-‘āmmiyyah* or *al-dārijah*, consists of the following major dialect groups: North African, known as *maghribī* or Western Arabic, and Levantine, known as Syrio-Palestinian or Eastern Arabic. Within colloquial Arabic, there are further subdivisions, such as *‘āmmiyyāt al-muthaqqafīn*, the colloquial of the educated, and *‘āmmiyyāt al-mutanawwirīn*, the colloquial of the basically educated, and *‘āmmiyyāt al-ummiyyīn*, the colloquial of the illiterate (Holes 15). Further dialectal differences are due to geographic factors, the urban/rural dichotomy, and the role of religion. In Egypt, for example, Cairene Arabic differs from Southern Egyptian Arabic; and in Morocco, the dialect differs between the eastern and western regions. Considering the multiple levels of the language which are experienced as a continuous whole, the schematic label of “diglossia” is inadequate when applied to Arabic (14; Parkinson 72-73).

While dialectal differences are often attributed to education and social class, in the Arabic world, language also functions as a religious identifier. In Lebanon, for example, it is often possible to distinguish between Christians or Muslims on the basis of their language, through Christians’ insistence on using greetings such as *ṣabāḥ al-khayr* and *masā’ al-khayr* as opposed to *al-salāmu ‘alaykum* and their avoidance of the Allāh Lexicon. In Morocco, Jewish people can be identified, among other things, on the basis of their pronunciation of the fricative *kha* in place of the laryngeally constricted gutturally aspirated *ḥa*. Iraqi Christians and Jews speak different dialects than Muslims do.³⁴

Even among Muslims themselves, it is possible to determine if people are Sunnī or Shī‘ī based on dialectal differences, particularly related to the use of the Allāh Lexicon. For example, when a Sunnī hears the name of the Prophet, he responds with either *‘alayhi al-salām*, “upon him be peace,” or *ṣallā Allāhu ‘alayhi wa-sallam*, “blessings and peace be upon him.” The Shī‘ites, however, typically bless Muḥammad as well as the Family of Muḥammad with *ṣallā Allāhu*

'alayhi wa sallam or “peace and blessings be upon him and his Family.” When the name of ‘Alī is mentioned, Sunnīs simply say *raḍiyya Allāhu ‘anhu*, “may Allāh be pleased with him,” or *karrama Allāhu wajhahu*, “may Allāh honor his face,” while Shī‘ites would typically say *'alayhi al-salām*, “upon him be peace,” which equally applies to all members of the *Ahl al-Bayt*, the People of the House [of the Prophet]. The mention of controversial persons such as Abū Sufyān, Mu‘āwiyah and Yazīd might elicit a *raḍiyya Allāhu ‘anhum* [may Allāh be pleased with them] from some extremist Wahhābīs, Deobandīs and other *nawāṣib* or enemies of *Ahl al-Bayt*, but would likely result in a *la‘anahum Allāh* [may Allāh curse them] from a Shī‘ite.³⁵

When the *adhān* is heard, Sunnīs merely repeat its words. The Shī‘ites do likewise but break out in moving chants of *Allāhumma ṣallī ‘alā Muḥammad wa ‘alī Muḥammad* or “O Allāh, bless Muḥammad and the Family of Muḥammad.” Shī‘ites can also be recognized by their refusal to respond to *al-salāmu ‘alaykum*, for reasons of mourning, on the Day of ‘Ashura and their own body of Allāh expressions, including cursing the killers of Ḥusayn (d. 680) upon drinking water, in the following words: *Ṣalawātu Allāhi ‘alā al-Ḥusayn wa ahli baytihi wa aṣḥābihi wa la‘natullāhi ‘alā qatalati al-Ḥusayni wa a‘dā’ihi* or “May Allāh bless Ḥusayn, his Family and his Companions, and curse those who killed Ḥusayn and those who were pleased with it” (qtd. Bostānī 99). Whether they are Sunnīs, Shī‘ites, Christians or Jews, the ability to identify the religious affiliation of an Arab can be as simple as asking a few indirect questions which might elicit the utilization of the Allāh Lexicon. As such, it makes it exceedingly difficult for outsiders, however fluent they may be in the Arabic language, to pose as Arabs, as the Arabic language serves as an identity marker revealing national origin, class, education and religion.³⁶

4.2 The Allāh Lexicon and Outsiders

Several scholars have studied politeness formulas and their uses among native and non-native Arabic speakers. In every case, their conclusions and concerns were the same: outsiders have difficulty absorbing the Allāh Lexicon, fail to use it when required or do so incorrectly, a problem which is religious and

cultural as much as linguistic. In Arabic, for example, the range of responses to compliments and favors is much vaster and more specific than it is in English.³⁷ One of the problems faced by non-native Arabic speakers is generalization, failure to draw the contextually appropriate expression from the corpus of the Allāh Lexicon, whereas an Egyptian, for example, “would probably use formulas which are more specific in content” (El-Sayed 11). At the root of this problem is the fact that “[b]ecause all these formulas emanate from Islāmic Arabic culture, they do not have equivalents” in English (11). As Richard S. Harrell explains,

It is an important cultural pattern that compliments or words of praise should be accompanied by a deferential reference to God. Without the reference to God, such statements appear crude, and in older, more traditional social circles, they are taken as bad omens which bring misfortune. References to God of this sort are usually not directly translatable into English. (352)

One of the fundamental differences between both languages is that in English the word “God” is usually restricted to either oaths, both profane and serious, or to formally serious situations (331). Arabic, on the other hand, “employs references to God and to religion in general, in a wide variety of everyday situations” (331). Oaths such as “I swear by the Glorious Qur’ān / the Chapter of Yā-Sīn / the Verse of the Chair” are unmatched in English and “[i]t is likely that native English-speakers will find them difficult to grasp” (Sāliḥ and ‘Abdul-Fattāḥ 119). While similarities between some expressions are sure to be found, “[m]any of the Arabic formulas involve references to religious concepts, especially those that are culture-specific, whereas the corresponding English ones do not” (El-Sayed 11). El-Sayed notes that “[a] failure to grasp the often subtle differences between first language and target language formulas can lead to serious misunderstandings and misjudgments” (1) and “[w]hat is more dangerous is that the partial equivalence of two formulas in two languages may be mistaken for a total one” (7). Part of the problem lies in the fact that “adult second language performers seem to use politeness features before they have acquired their co-occurrence rules and appropriate variation” (4).³⁸ As a result, “[a]nalysis of politeness formulas needs

to incorporate the set of rules and conventions governing the situations in which they can be used" (6). This also applies for compliments which are culture-specific objects. Aḥmad 'Aly Mursy and John Wilson are categorical that "any understanding of compliment behavior must take account of such things as values, tact, courtesy, and general group, as opposed to individual, values" (133). This may be because Islāmic culture, as opposed to Western culture, places the interest of the group above the interest of the individual and values responsibilities and obligations to the community.

As many Allāh phrases do not have equivalents in other languages, foreign speakers of Arabic must be cautioned about drawing upon first language formulas. As Davies explains, "[i]f an Arab language learner translates and uses his first language formula in the target language, the result may be a fairly inappropriate contribution to the conversation, one which seems exaggerated or stylistically odd, or one which seems to make no sense at all" (80). The inappropriate use of the Allāh Lexicon can lead to many problems. As Davies explains,

Learners with a good mastery of the pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary of a language may nevertheless be extremely unsuccessful in their interactions with native speakers of that language if they do not have some understanding of their norms of politeness; indeed, as would be the case with stylistic errors in general...it is likely that the more proficient learners are in other aspects, the greater will be the danger that their failure to use the appropriate strategies may be perceived, not as evidence of lack of proficiency, but rather as a sign of disrespect, hostility, or other negative attitudes. (76)

Davies warns Arabic students that: "a pair of similar formulas in two languages rarely turn out to be completely equivalent in all respects" (77). She also cautions that "a fixed formula in one language is not readily paired with any corresponding formula in another" (80). She explains that "the true significance of a formula is determined by a complex of cultural and social conventions and that the outsider should therefore be wary about misinterpreting it as evidence of the user's personality or individual attitudes" (77). She cautions that "a feature which is

perceived as courteous by speakers of one language may not be so judged by speakers of another” (77) and warns that “learners whose first language lacks a formula...risk being perceived as abrupt or impolite if they omit what is felt to be essential in the other language” (80). A simple use of *bārakallāhufik* in response to a trivial service might seem ironical or sarcastic instead of polite” since “In Moroccan Arabic...small gestures will typically not warrant thanks at all” (Davies 85). A mere *lā* or no can be terribly rude in Arabic culture where the polite response to a request one cannot or will not grant is *Allāh yu’ṭik* or “May Allāh give you” based on the Qur’ānic verse “And even if thou hast to turn away from them...speak to them a word of kindness” (17:28). You may not have given them what they want, but at least you gave them a blessing.³⁹ Non-native speakers can also encounter problems with greeting rituals. As Khalid S.A. Ḥassanain warns in his article “Saudi Mode of Greeting Rituals,” “[v]iolations of...social greeting rituals lead to undesired consequences or to a provocation of violence resulting in misunderstanding or misinterpreting of the verbal and non-verbal behavior in the Saudi setting” (68).

The proper use of the Allāh Lexicon is also particularly difficult to acquire due to the following factors: (1) the expressions are primarily of religious origin and require an understanding of Islām, the Qur’ān and the Sunnah; (2) “the Arabic sequences are much longer than the English; they contain more words and are more likely to continue beyond the initial compliment and corresponding response” since “the longer the interaction, the greater the sincerity” (Nelson 429-30); (3) “the sociolinguistic aspects of discourse are extremely difficult for non-native speakers to acquire on their own” (Schmidt 69) and (4) “few courses provide specifications of how, when, and where to use the formulas” (Davies 77).

4.3 Politics and Polemics: The Allāh Lexicon in France

Language scholars and teachers throughout much of the world have come to comprehend that the understanding of foreign cultures and peoples is an essential part of language learning and that “language cannot meaningfully be studied in isolation from context and culture” (Emery 196). In France, however, the opposite is true, with French teachers of Arabic addressing what seems to be

an unsolvable issue: how to teach secular Arabic, how to teach Arabic without directly dealing with Islām. According to Paul Balta, “[e]nseigner l’arabe, ce n’est pas aller contre la laïcité” (123) [teaching Arabic does not go against secularism]. He admits that “[l]’Islam est un élément incontournable dans l’apprentissage de cette langue, mais il est possible de l’aborder d’une manière laïque” (123) [Islām is an unavoidable element in learning this language, but it is possible to deal with it in a secular manner]. According to Balta, “Si l’école n’offre pas la possibilité d’apprendre l’arabe, les familles se retournent alors vers les associations, souvent d’inspiration religieuse, qui sont encore plus difficiles à contrôler” (123) [If public schools do not offer the possibility of learning Arabic, parents turn to associations, often of religious inspiration, which are even more difficult to control]. In his view, when Muslim youth feel that the system seeks to take away their culture, “ils se culpabilisent et se radicalisent” (122) [they become guilt ridden and radicalize themselves].⁴⁰ As such, he greatly encourages the French government to provide Arabic language instruction at all levels, from elementary school to university. In doing so, of course, “L’arabe ne doit pas être considéré comme langue religieuse” (123) [Arabic must not be considered as a religious language]. He feels that if the teaching of Arabic was valued as part of the national educational system, “elle pourrait être un instrument puissant de laïcité et d’intégration” (123) [it could be a powerful instrument encouraging secularism and integration]. He presumes that if the state feigns support for the Islāmic culture of the students, they would not feel the need to use religious symbols like the *ḥijāb* to express their differences. Not only should Arabic be a means of Muslim control in France, Balta wishes to export it abroad. As he explains

Quant aux pays de l’Afrique noire, demandeurs de professeurs d’arabe, la France n’a-t-elle pas intérêt à leur fournir plutôt que les laisser recruter ailleurs des enseignants parfois médiocres et souvent influencés par une idéologie intégriste: la méthode de l’école française des arabisants est aussi un moyen de former les esprits. (119)

[Is it not in the interest of France to provide Arabic instructors to black African countries which are in need of them? Is it not better than letting them recruit instructors from abroad who are often mediocre and influenced by the fundamentalist ideology? The approach of the French School is also a means of building minds.]

Balta does not hide “the French Solution” to “the Muslim Problem.” When asked whether a secular Islām will be born in Western Europe, he explains that a new generation of secular Muslim intellectuals can serve as an example and “préparer l’ère post-islamiste” (330) [prepare the post-Islāmist era]. This would permit Muslims to continue, if they wish, to practice their religion within the confines of secular republicanism while ensuring that nothing stops them from discontinuing to believe or to change their beliefs (330).

Linda Ḥamoud’s article, “Télévision et religion en cours d’arabe,” further exposes the French attempt to subvert Islām through Arabic language instruction. Ḥamoud readily admits that “il existe un véritable problème dès que l’on parle de religion en cours de langue arabe” [there is a real problem once one speaks of religion in an Arabic language class] (67). The problem with teaching Arabic, she notes, is that it arouses interest in Islām. As she explains,

Ce problème tient au fait que les interrogations des élèves, dès la classe de sixième, concernant la religion musulmane sont fréquentes et insistantes auprès du professeur d’arabe. Dans le cadre de l’école républicaine et laïque, qui est en concurrence directe avec l’enseignement de la langue arabe dispensée dans les mosquées, la parole de l’enseignant sur les sujets religieux entre en conflit direct avec la parole de l’Imam. En effet, celui-ci possède une légitimité naturelle pour ce type de sujets, et du coup, le professeur arabisant se trouve souvent désarmé face aux interrogations de ses élèves. (68)

[The problem revolves around the fact that from sixth grade and up the questions of students concerning the Muslim religion made to the Arabic teacher are frequent and persistent. In the context of a republican secular school system, which finds itself in direct competition with the Arabic language instruction provided by mosques, the opinions of the teacher regarding religious subjects comes into direct conflict with the teachings of the Imam. In fact, he has a natural authority on these types of subjects and, as a result, Arabic instructors find themselves unprepared to respond to students’ questions.]

The solution to this problem, according to Ḥamoud, is to use and diffuse: to deal with a religious sequence from Arabic television, addressing and analyzing images and elements so that students “*évitent de recevoir le discours religieux ‘en pleine figure’*” [avoid getting hit in the face with the religious message] (68). The goal, she explains, is “*montrer aux élèves que l’intertextualité va au-delà de la parole prononcée par le Cheikh*” [to show students that intertextuality goes beyond the words pronounced by the Shaykh] (69). Ḥamoud explains that religious discourse is based on “*les émotions et rarement la raison humaine*” [emotions and rarely on human reason] (69) which is why it should be avoided. The pedagogical objective of this approach is not really the analysis of words but contextualization of cultural references (69). In short, the French policy with regard to the Islāmic presence in the Arabic language and culture is to deflect it in an attempt to create a psychological break between Arabic and Islām, an approach which may contribute to Arabic language attrition, a problem facing Arabic-speaking Muslims living outside of the Arabic-Islāmic world.⁴¹

The opinions expressed by the likes of Paul Balta and Linda Ḥamoud, both of whom are secular Christian Arabs, are perfectly in line with France’s fundamentalist secular philosophy, in which there is no place for the Islāmic religion in public schools, no place for Islām in the Arabic language, and no place for the *ḥijāb* on the heads of Muslim girls.⁴² It is clear that the secular French have little tolerance for diversity, are afraid of Islām, and wish to undermine it by all means, by prohibiting the Islāmic headdress and by attempting to purge the Arabic language of its integral religious expressions, the very Islāmic heritage being passed on through Arabic instruction delivered in mosques which is seen as a threat to the teaching of secular Arabic. When faced with the “Muslim Problem,” the French strategy is one of mind control, double speak, cultural colonialism, and ideological imperialism.

The difficulty of learning the Allāh Lexicon and the degree to which a foreign speaker wishes to use it have also been addressed by several scholars. To put it plainly, “[t]he question of to what extent learners of a language should also learn to adopt the socio-cultural conventions of its speakers is a delicate one”

(Davies 82). According to Davies, “[c]ompromises are often possible; when two alternative formulas exist, learners can select the one which most corresponds to their own outlook, and certain non-obligatory formulas can be avoided” (82). While this may be the case in some rare instances, such compromises are few and far between. From an Islāmic standpoint, a mere *shukran* is insufficient when responding to a compliment or thanking someone for a favor or service. From an Arabic standpoint, the same applies. As Nelson has shown, Arabic-speaking Americans living in Syria are much more likely than Syrians to use Appreciation Tokens [e.g. thanks] in responding to compliments (429). However, “[t]he infrequency of this response in the Arabic data suggest that the utterance *shukran* [‘thank you’] by itself is not usually a sufficient response to an Arabic compliment and needs to be supplemented by additional words” (Nelson 429). Ferguson’s study on “God-wishes in Syrian Arabic” also debunks the idea of compromise. According to his research:

the pattern of polite health inquiry in Syrian Arabic consists of (a) an initiating formula which is one of a set that has the lexical meaning of “how are you?,” “how is your health?,” to which there is (b) an obligatory response which is one of a set of God wishes and other God expressions that may optimally be accompanied by an expression of good health. (76)

In order to avoid any possible misunderstandings, Nelson advises students of the Arabic language to learn the more extended kinds of Arabic responses (429). In effect, “[t]o achieve pragmatic competence in Arabic, American students of Arabic need to learn the specific formulas used in responding to compliments on particular attributes” (429). For Desmond, the question is clear: “It is impossible for a Westerner to speak Arabic with any fluency without becoming arabized to a certain extent” (14). Considering that the Allāh Lexicon is so inextricably associated with an Islāmic identity, it seems unlikely that the *ajānib* or outsiders would be able or even willing to acquire it and much less likely that they could capture the subtleties encountered therein unless they embraced Islām, studied its sources, and immersed themselves in Arabic-Islāmic culture for an extended period of time.

4.4 Inside the Allāh Lexicon

While Arabs can make claims to their colloquial dialects, they cannot make claims to classical Arabic. As Berque explains, “[t]he *lughah* is nobody’s mother tongue. It is acquired through the study of great writings and the greatest of them all, the Qur’ān” (190). Just as all Muslims are equal before Allāh, they are all equal before the language of Allāh and all can have access to the Allāh Lexicon, in accord with their linguistic level and degree of initiation into Islām.

The Allāh Lexicon is a religious code of communication with multiple layers of manifestation, increasing in complexity and sophistication in accord with the degree of Islāmic erudition of its speakers, ranging from an illiterate Arab with vague notions of the Qur’ānic source of his Allāh sayings to the greatest leaders of Islām who use them to express a specific sense in its most subtle shades.⁴³ When addressed, the Twelve Imāms of the Household of the Prophet would often respond with Qur’ānic quotes and allusions. Their perfect mastery of the Qur’ān manifested itself in their daily discourse and was even absorbed by their servants and slaves. One remarkable case was that of Fiḍḍah, the Abbysinian housemaid of the Prophet’s daughter, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (d. 631-32) and her children, who was so marked by the spirituality which surrounded her that she spoke nothing but verses from the Qur’ān.⁴⁴ Another similar case is related in *Biḥār al-anwār* regarding a slave girl of Imām ‘Alī Zayn al-‘Ābidīn (d. 710?) who accidentally dropped a pot and struck him in the face, cutting him. He turned towards her and the slave girl said: “Allāh says: ‘those who restrain their rage.’” He said: “I have restrained my rage.” She said: “And pardon the people.” He said: “Allāh has pardoned you.” She said: “And Allāh loves the good-doers” (3:134) to which he replied, “Go. You are a free woman” (Chittick 13). To the uninitiated, this exchange may not seem special; however, to those who are well-versed in the Muslim Scripture, it is most impressive as the slave girl was speaking straight from the Qur’ān, showing that the Allāh Lexicon serves both manifest and latent functions in the Arabic language. So moved was the Imām by her Qur’ānic quotes that he set her free. On another occasion, a man cursed the Imām to his face, but he merely ignored him. Then the man shouted: “I mean

you!” The Imām replied: “And from you I am turning away,” alluding to the Qur’ānic verse “Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant” (7:199) (Chittick 16). Among devout Muslims, the love for the Qur’ān is so great that they wish to memorize it so that it becomes part of them; they seek to become saturated with its spirituality and to emulate the Prophet who was described by ‘Aishah, one of his wives, as “The walking Qur’ān,” that is, the very embodiment and personification of Islāmic ethics.

4.5 The Allāh Lexicon under Attack

The Arabs, as Hourānī explains, are “more conscious of their language than any people in the world” (1). While the Arabs were proud of their language in pre-Islāmic times, producing pearls of poetry, the reality of the Qur’ānic revelation is the reason for the prestige it now possesses. As Desmond describes,

The Arabic language ... is more than the unifying bond of the Arab world; it also shapes and molds that world. Like other languages, it carries within it a whole series of built-in judgements and attitudes. Since it is the language of the Qur’ān and Muḥammad, the Prophet of God, it has an even greater effect on its speakers than other languages have on their speakers. (14)

In the Arabic Islāmic world, both the Arabic language and the Islāmic religion are often viewed as inseparable parts of the same Arab Muslim identity, a fact which has been readily understood by those who seek to undermine it.⁴⁵

With the fall of Granada in 1492, the “Muslim Question,” needed to be addressed. What was to be done with the millions of Muslims in Spain? The answer came quickly: forced conversion to Catholicism through the destruction of everything related to the Islāmic identity. This left Muslims with two choices: leave Spain or practice pious dissimulation or *taqiyyah* (Watt 182). Among the prohibitions enacted were bans on Islāmic dress, ritual baths, prayers and fasting, the pilgrimage to Makkah, and paying *zakāh*. At the fore, however, was the prohibition to either speak or write Arabic, for which the penalties were severe: “thirty days in prison in chains for the first offense, double the sentence for the second offense, and for the third offense men were given a hundred lashes and

four years in the galleys while women and youths under seventeen were given four years in prison” (Thomson 295). The persecution of cryptic Muslims was so severe that “[t]he parents could not even afford to say *Allāh* in the presence of young children,” who were kept ignorant of Islām at least until the age of reason, for fear that a childish indiscretion might betray the whole family (284). Severed from Arabic, the secret Muslims were cut off from the Qur’ān. While they lost their language, the Moriscos retained the Arabic script for writing in Spanish, a mark of the religious significance of the script and their determination to affirm their cultural identity as Muslims (López-Morillas 17). With time, however, the knowledge of the Arabic script was also lost. The only thing that remained in their hearts was a silent affirmation of *Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Muḥammadun Rasūlu Allāh*, without knowing experientially the meaning of what they secretly believed (Thomson 285). Due to this loss of experiential knowledge over the generations, the knowledge of Islām among these secret Muslims became severely limited, facilitating their gradual assimilation into Catholicism and the eventual elimination of Islām in Spain.⁴⁶

This same desire to eliminate Islām through the elimination of Arabic was demonstrated by Western powers when they colonized the Arabic Islāmic world. According to Darwish al-Jundī, “The imperialists...were aware of the influence of the Arabic language...They fought it and tried to replace it with their own languages. They also attempted to develop colloquial and regional dialects, hoping thereby to stamp out classical Arabic” (Laffin 67-68). In most Arabic-speaking countries, some secularized politicians or writers have advocated converting the regional dialect into the official language and relegating classical Arabic to ruin. In every case, this has failed, due in large part to a profound Arabic-Islāmic identity.

In non-Arab countries, where the bond to the Qur’ān was limited to similarities in script and language differences made access to its significance more difficult, efforts to further distance Muslims from their scripture have been more successful. In Turkey, for example, Kemal Atatürk eliminated the Arabic alphabet and replaced it with a Latin-based one, effectively ensuring that future

generations of Turks would not be able to read the Qur'ān in its original Arabic without the substantial effort required to learn the script.⁴⁷ In Iran, the Shah commenced a campaign to “purge” the Persian language from Arabic loan-words and planned to replace the Persian alphabet, of Arabic origin, with the Latin one.⁴⁸ His attempt to attack the Arabic script was viewed as an attempt to alienate the Iranians from the Qur'ān and played a role in his overthrow in the Islāmic Revolution of Iran. In some of the ex-Soviet republics in Central Asia, a struggle is underway between Turkey, advocating the use of the Latin-based alphabet and Iran, advocating the use of the Arabic-Persian alphabet, as replacements for Russian Cyrillic. Both Turkey and Iran are vying for influence and to draw these countries into their spheres of political and, in the case of Iran, religious influence. The importance of the Arabic script extends far beyond the mere representation of a given set of sounds by a particular set of letters (López-Morillas 18).⁴⁹ Whether it's Morisco Spanish, Persian, Ottoman Turkish or Urdu, the “use of the Arabic alphabet brings with it a considerable degree of Arabization and Islāmicization of the original languages” (18). Muslims in the Indian subcontinent have been very conscious of this fact. Since Urdu, in its written form, used the Arabic-Persian alphabet, it is perceived with great symbolic importance. As a result, the educated Muslim elite has viewed any opposition to the use of the Urdu script as a threat, not only to their professional positions, but also to Islāmic culture in general (Minault 456).

According to various sources, the Allāh Lexicon appears to be under attack by both malevolent and benign forces. In the case of France, a deliberate campaign of cultural imperialism is being waged against the Allāh Lexicon. In the Middle East, the Allāh Lexicon is facing challenges posed by Western popular culture by means of television, movies, and music. As Ferguson has pointed out with regards to Syria, the younger generation's reduced use of Arabic politeness formulas, both in terms of formulas and complexity of patterns, may be attributed to urbanization and secularization, as well as European and American influence (1983: 68). The Arabic language is undergoing a radical reduction in the use of Islāmic, Allāh-centric, expressions, which are being supplanted by simplified

forms based on English and French norms.⁵⁰ The situation is accentuated in the Western world where a decline in the use of Allāh expressions is observed among Arabic-speaking Muslims. While natural issues of language transfer and acquisition may account for the omission of Allāh phrases, one must consider what that lack means in terms of religious bonds. In point of fact, the missing phrases and expletives from the Allāh Lexicon mean that speakers are in limited contact with the Divine, a devastating blow when one considers that Allāh and Islām are the basis of Arabic-Islāmic identity. Whether at home or abroad, the “occidentosis” of Jalāl Al-I Aḥmad and the “Westoxication” of ‘Alī Shariatī seem stronger than ever, especially taken in the context of events subsequent to 9/11.

5. Conclusions

In the previous pages we have examined a small but representative number of Allāh expressions drawn from the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. From the thousands of Allāh expressions contained in the Qur’ān, cited by the Prophet, expounded upon by the *awliyā’* [“saints”] and the *‘ulamā’* [scholars], and enriched by the oral and literary tradition, the Allāh Lexicon has grown exponentially, far surpassing what is contained in the Qur’ānic and Prophetic corpus. Not just a convention, the Allāh Lexicon is a conviction, a living, vibrant body of unique expressions indicative of the vitality of the Islāmic faith and the centrality of *al-tawḥīd*, or divine unity, in Arabic-Islāmic culture and civilization.

Whether Arabic-speaking Muslims are more “religious” than other Muslims is not at issue, merely the core level of accommodation the language made to the religion under the auspices of the Prophet Muḥammad and his followers. It is difficult to image the campaign they must have put forth to win over an entire language and largely transform it. This study on the history of the lexicon has presented a hitherto unexplored view of the power and insight of the Prophet and his ability to see beyond the obvious features of religious belief to its possible impact on daily life and speech, placing him at a higher level of influence than has otherwise been recognized by the non-Muslims of the world particularly. Far from a final study, this chapter marks an initial exploration into the oceanic depths of the Allāh Lexicon where countless treasures can be found.

End Notes

¹ Editor's Note: We use *dīwān* here in the sense of a collection of Arabic poems. Although Qu'rān is not traditionally considered as poetry, as this might imply human authorship, it can perhaps be perceived as divine poetry.

² Editor's Note: The fact that many Muslims, Arabs and non-Arabs, believe that Arabic is Allāh's language can easily be ascertained by googling "language of Allāh."

³ Editor's Note: According to research conducted by the Bible Resource Center, about one in five (18%) Christians report they never read the Bible. About as many (23%) read the Bible at least once a day. The median response is two or three times a month. Older adults were more likely to read the Bible and read it at least once a day. These numbers increase somewhat among Church-going Christians. According William Proctor, some surveys indicate that 20 to 25% of Americans have read through the entire Bible, a figure he believes to be high. When asked how many have read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, the response is less than 10% (<http://www.missoulian.com/specials/faith/messil.php>).

⁴ Editor's Note: Along with the Holy Qur'ān, the prophetic traditions and Islāmic literature in general have played important roles in the diffusion of the Allāh Lexicon. One particularly rich source of Allāh expressions is to be found in Islāmic books for children, where all the basic formulas are taught, as this forms a fundamental part of early childhood education in Muslim society. As El-Sayed explains,

Children are...trained to use correct forms of thanking especially those used before beginning a meal and finishing it. As Muslims, Egyptian parents train their children on the correct forms of, for instance, *bismillāh* (in the name of God) [a form uttered before beginning a meal] and *alḥamdulillāh* (praise be to God) [a form uttered after finishing a meal.] (19-20).

⁵ Editor's Note: As this is a socio-linguistic study, the authenticity of the *ahādīth* cited in this study is of little importance. Whether the traditions are *ṣaḥīḥ* [authentic], *ḥasan* [good], *da'if* [weak], *mutawātir* [constant], *mashhūr* [well-known], *gharīb* [strange] or even *mawḍu'* [spurious], they have circulated for over 14 centuries, through the oral and literary traditions, and have contributed to the diffusion of the Allāh Lexicon. Overall, the traditions cited here are *ṣaḥīḥ* and we have followed the principle that what is in accord with the Qur'ān is acceptable and what is contrary to the Qur'ān is to be rejected. As the Father of *Fiqh*, Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 765-66) said: "Whatsoever is reported about us, if it is possible for one of mankind and you do not understand or comprehend it, do not deny it, but you can attribute it to us. However, if it is impossible for anyone of mankind, then deny it, and do not attribute it to us" (qtd. al-Muẓaffar 38). When citing *ahādīth*, we have followed the common convention of identifying the collection (Bukhārī, Muslim, etc.) and not the specific page. As the books of *ahādīth* are systematically organized and well-indexed, it requires little effort to look up the traditions in question, particularly with online collections like *al-Muḥaddith*, CD ROMs, and a concordance like Wensick's. While Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* is not a book of traditions *per se*, its thematic arrangement allows easy location of relevant traditions. We have relied primarily on Sunnī books of *ḥadīth* for this study; however, the majority of *ahādīth* cited are also found in Shī'ite sources.

⁶ Editors's Note: *Aḥādīth* are divided into two categories: 1) *nabawī* or prophetic, which record the words of Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allāh, and *qudsī* or sacred, in which the Prophet conveys revelations which did not form part of the Qur'ān. The prophetic traditions commence with the words "The Messenger of Allāh said," while the divine traditions start with "The Messenger of Allāh said that Allāh said."

⁷ Editor's Note: This could equally apply to decrees determined to distinguish the Muslim minority from their adversaries, such as "Oppose the polytheists. Let the beards grow long and shave the moustaches" (Bukhārī and Muslim); and "He who imitates a people [other than the Muslims] is of them" (Aḥmad), among others.

⁸ Editor's Note: *The Pipes of Pan at Jajouka*, a field recording made in Morocco by Brian Jones and Brion Gysin in 1968, captures what seems to be ancient Lupercalia rituals dedicated to the god Pan, known as Bou Jeloud, the Father of Skins, that are hours and sometimes days, long, in the village of Jajouka in the Rif mountains near Tangiers. Performed by the Ahl Serif tribe, the Rites of Pan were long kept secret under their ragged cloak of Islām. Nowadays, however, the Master Musicians of Jajouka travel the world performing their fusion of pagan trance music, theatre and dance (Fuson). The festival includes evocations to Bou Jaloud or Pan, the goat god, as well as the female jinn known as Aisha Qandisha. Although of Arabic origin, the name may have supplanted the early names of Aishim, the angels of fertility, Astarte, the goddess of sexuality, Esha, the feminine element of cosmic fire, or Asherat, goddess of life. The last name Qandisha or Qadisha may be derived from the Hebrew *qadesh*, meaning holy, which applied to temple harlots, prostitutes and sodomites. The name may also be linked to the following heathen deities: Qodsha, Kadesh or Qadesh, the holy one, the mistress of the gods, the divine force of sexuality; Kether, the most ancient holy one, the Akkadian Qadishtu, the holy women, dedicated to the service of the goddess Ishtar, the great whore, through sexual service to men. For more on the ancient origin of the name Aisha Qadisha, refer to *In a Chariot Drawn by Lions* by Asphodel P. Long, *The Cipher of Genesis* by Carlo Suarés, *The Book of Goddesses and Heroines* by Patricia Monaghan, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* by Agrippa, *When God was a Woman* by Merlin Stone, *The Metaphysics of Sex* by Julius Evola, and Barbara Walker's *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*.

⁹ Editor's Note: According to the Qur'ān, "Anyone who after accepting faith in Allāh utters unbelief--except under compulsion, his heart remaining in faith--but as such as open their breast to unbelief,--on them is the wrath from Allāh, and theirs will be a dreadful penalty" (16:106). The hiding of one's faith due to fear is also permitted in 40:28 and 28:20. Due to persecution, the very survival of Shī'ism depended upon *taqiyyah*, reaching a point where Imām Ja'far al-Šādiq (d. 765-66) said that: "He who has no *taqiyyah* has no faith" (Amālī). *Taqiyyah*, of course, is an Islāmic practice, and not solely a Shī'ite one, and was widespread among the Spanish Muslims after the fall of Granada in 1492 who outwardly accepted the official religion while practicing their own faith in secret.

¹⁰ Editor's Note: In psychological terms, this could be a case of over-compensating, a common characteristic of Jewish converts to Catholicism in Spain. To assert their sincerity, and to dissimulate their ethnicity, they adopted religiously-oriented family names like Cruz [Cross] and Germanic names like Guzmán. Many became priests, and some, like Juan de Torquemada, the notorious Grand Inquisitor, went to the extreme of persecuting their own people. It may be that some of the early Muslims with polytheistic pasts wanted to publicly profess their monotheistic faith.

¹¹ Editor's Note: The Allāh Lexicon contains many cases where the name of Allāh is implied. As Masliyah explains, "In many cases in Iraqi Arabic where the name of the supernatural is not mentioned in the curse, it is understood that Allāh is the one referred to" (2001: 274).

¹² Editor's Note: According to all Shī'ite sources, Imāmī, Ismā'īlī, and Zaydī, the phrase "Come to the best of actions" was part of the original prophetic *adhān* but was suppressed by Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab (d. 644) who insisted that *jihād*, and not prayer, was the best of actions (Howard 219). As Ṭabāṭaba'i explains, "even though during the life of the Holy Prophet it was the practice to recite in the call to prayers, 'Hurry to the best act' [*hayyā 'alā khayr al-'amal*], 'Umar ordered that it be omitted because he said it would prevent people from participating in holy war, *jihād*" (1977: 46). While most Orientalists support the "orthodox" Sunnī argument on the issue, Guillaume believed that the word *falāḥ*, which is generally rendered as "salvation" and "prosperity," must be an Arabized form of *pulhana*, divine worship, which, among Aramaic-speaking Jews and Christians, was connected to service to God. For Guillaume, the Shī'ite reference to '*amal*' must surely be a memory of the original meaning of *falāḥ* which may have been lost over time due to a semantic shift. I.K.A. Howard has also supported the Shī'ite view on the subject in his article "The Development of the *adhān* and *iqāmah*." According to Howard, "although the matter does not appear to be much discussed by non-Shī'is during the latter half of the second century and the first half of the third...there is some evidence for it belonging to the *adhān* at a much earlier period (219-20). In his recension of the *Muwaffa'*, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī (d. 805) records a tradition on the authority of Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795) that Ibn 'Umar sometimes used to say *hayyā 'alā khayr al-'amal* after *hayyā 'alā al-falaḥ* (Howard 220). This tradition seems to have been suppressed in Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Laythī's recension of the *Muwaffa'* and later Sunnī sources. It is only mentioned anew in Ibn Ḥazm's (d. 1064) *Kitāb al-Muḥallā* (160-61), cited al-Bayhaqī (d. 1066) and another with the fourth Imām, 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn in the *isnād*. It comes as no surprise that Ibn Ḥazm, notorious for his anti-Shī'itism, roundly condemns these traditions as fabrications. According to objective eyes of I.K.A. Howard, however:

...the tradition quoted by al-Shaybānī seems to be genuine. There appears to be no reason for its fabrication. Its *isnād* (Mālik-Nāfi'-Ibn 'Umar) is a standard Medinan *isnād*, but in this case used for a practice that was no longer standard. The tradition does seem to point to a formula that was included in the *adhān* at a much earlier period.

Al-Faḍl bin al-Shādhān's (d. 873-74) argument that the formula *hayyā 'alā khayr al-'amal* was in the original *adhān*, only to be suppressed by the second Caliph, may not be as polemical as it first appears. As Howard admits, "[i]t might well be the case that these words were removed from the *adhān* at some time very early in Islām, and it is not impossible that it was during 'Umar's caliphate" (220).

The insertion of *al-ṣalātu khayrun min al-nawm* [Prayer is better than sleep] into the *adhān* of the *fajr* prayer is also subject to great debate. According to Shī'ite sources, the line was introduced by the Caliph 'Umar. Sunnī traditions and sources express four views on the subject: 1) the line was part of the original *adhān*, 2) the line was introduced by Bilāl and retained by the Prophet, 3) the line was introduced by a *mu'adhdhin* and retained by the Caliph 'Umar, or 4) the line was introduced by the Caliph 'Umar. The Sunnī scholars who accept the authenticity of the line in question cite traditions of the Prophet and his Companions from Bukhārī (d. 870), Abū Dāwūd (d. 817), Nasā'ī (d. 915), Tirmidhī (d. 892), Dāraqutnī (d. 995), Ibn Khuzaymah (d. 924), and al-Bayhaqī (d. 1066). The Sunnī scholars who believe the line was added cite various prophetic traditions from Imām Mālik (d. 795) and Bayhaqī, as well as historical sources like Ṭabarī's (d. 923) *Tārikh* and Abū Hilāl al-Askarī's *Kitāb al-Awā'il*, namely, *The Book of Firsts*. Although it is a non-academic, polemical website, answering-ansar.org contains a long list of references from Sunnī sources on the subject. For a more academic overview of some of these sources, Howard's article is essential (221).

Another major innovation to the *adhān* was the practice of greeting the Caliph or *amīrs* in the call to prayer. According to al-Balādhurī, the formula *al-salāmu 'alayka ya khalīfatu rasūlī'llāh* was inserted before the formula *hayyā 'alā al-ṣalāh* (Howard 223). Under 'Umar, this

was changed to *al-salāmu 'alayka ya amīr al-mu'minīn*, a practice which continued through the reign of Uthmān, Umayyad rule, and the early 'Abbāsīd period. When Imām 'Alī criticized Mu'āwīyah for using the title "Leader of the Believers," he may have been responding to its innovative use in the call to prayer. While some Sunnīs criticize Shī'ites for inserting 'Alī into the *adhān*, the Shī'ites have some justification for it in the corpus of *aḥādīth*. In fact, there are plenty of Shī'ite traditions indicating that the line "I bear witness that 'Alī is the Friend of Allāh" is permissible. Even some Sunnī sources state that Salmān and Abū Dharr used to recite '*Alīyyun Walī Allāh* in the *adhān* and that this was approved by the Prophet. This view is shared by Sunnī scholars like Shaykh Abd Allāh Maraghī in his book *al-Salāfah fī amr al-khilāfah* and Waḥīd al-Zaman in his book *Anwār al-lughat* (5-6) which was recently re-published in Pakistan under the name *Lughat al-hadīth*.

Perhaps the strongest argument in favor of the authenticity of the Shī'ite *adhān* resides in the explication of its origins. For Sunnī Muslims, the *adhān* was not the product of the Prophet. It was the result of a dream by 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭab and 'Abd Allāh ibn Zayd. Since it was not from God or the Prophet, it had no particular sanctity. What was created by a person can easily be changed by that person. For the Shī'ites however, the introduction of the *adhān* presents an entirely supernatural picture. As Howard explains,

The Prophet on his ascension into heaven took part in the heavenly *ṣalāh*. Gabriel gave the *adhān*, the Prophet led the *ṣalāh*, and the angels and the prophets participated in it. This is followed in the next tradition in *al-Kāfī* by an account of how Gabriel came down and taught the Prophet the *adhān* while 'Alī was present. The Prophet then gave 'Alī instructions to teach Bilāl the *adhān*. This account neatly connects the *adhān* to the Prophet's ascension into heaven... 'Alī is then made party of the Prophet's instruction in the *adhān* and himself teaches Bilāl. According to this version, the *adhān* was fixed in its complete form from the moment of its inception. 'Alī was present at the prophetic inspiration, and is a witness to its validity; but not only is he that, he is also the instructor of the first *mu'adhdhin*. Thus 'Alī's position counters the claims being made on behalf of 'Umar. (226-27)

For the Shī'ites, the *adhān* was given by God to the Prophet via the Angel Gabriel. Since it was of divine origin, the Shī'ites were in no position to change it. In fact, the Shī'ites have been the strongest to resist any innovations in Islām, be it in *wudhū*, *ṣalāh* or the *adhān*. They have always adhered closely to the Qur'ān, rejecting any traditions which contradicted it. In the case of the *adhān*

They have preserved the twofold *shahādah* at a time when the *wilāyah* of 'Alī had become one of the fundamental pillars of their faith, and they include no mention of "I witness that 'Alī is the *Walī* of Allāh." Some of their more enthusiastic brethren endeavored to introduce this into the *adhān*, but they were roundly denounced by Ibn Bābawayh and al-Ṭūsī. (Howard 227-28)

Another argument favoring the Shī'ite stance on the *adhān* can be found in the fact that Bilāl ibn Ribāh (d. 642), the Prophet's *mu'adhdhin*, refused to make the call to prayer during the Caliphate of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān. Although Bilāl's refusal to call the *adhān* has been traditionally interpreted as an act of political protest, indicating that Bilāl supported Alī's claim to the Caliphate, it may also have reflected his refusal to accept the corruptions made to the call to prayer. According to Imāmī sources, Bilāl was a Shī'ite. He was praised by the Sixth Imām in the following terms: "May God bless Bilāl! He loved us, the family of the Prophet, and was one of the most pious servants of Allāh."

¹³ Editor's Note: These lines are exclusively uttered by Sunnī Muslims for the morning call to prayer.

¹⁴ Editor's Note: Considered a "holy plant" which gives God-consciousness, hashish has a long history of use throughout the Arab-Islāmic world. Another widely consumed drug in Yemen, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya is the narcotic and highly addictive *qāt* which is known as "the leaf of Allāh."

¹⁵ Editor's Note: It is typically followed by the attributes *al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful. It is even utilized as a header on all communiqués issued by the secular P.L.O. as an act of homage to the rediscovered force of Islām and a recovery of Islāmic rhetoric (Balta 196). Muslim scholars like Aḥmad Ghorāb find it particularly offensive that academic publications like the *Journal of Islāmic Studies* prohibit authors from starting any article with *bismillāh* as well as saying "peace and blessings be upon him" after mentioning the name of the Prophet (18).

Besides *al-Rahmān al-Rahīm*, Muslims have ninety-seven other divine names to draw from. Imām Khomeini, for example, started some of his letters with *Bismillāh al-Muntaqim*. In the name of Allāh, the Avenger. In Islāmic Iran, the volunteers for martyrdom would swear: "In the name of Allāh the Avenger, and in the name of the Imām Khomeini, I swear on the Holy Book to perform my sacred duty as a Child of the Imām and Soldier of Islām in this Holy War to restore to this world the Light of Divine Justice" (Tāherī 113). The assassin of Anwar al-Sādāt reportedly had *Bismillāh al-Muntaqim* inscribed on his gun.

¹⁶ Editor's Note: Nefzawī's (d. 16th c.) curious combination of religious expressions and erotic descriptions has quite a comical effect. His work commences with the following words: "Praise be to God who has placed the source of man's greatest pleasure in women's natural parts," and, after describing, in explicit and lascivious detail, genitalia, foreplay, copulation, cunninglingus, felatio, fornication, adultery, voyeurism, cuckoldry and, in the 1907 Charles Carrington edition, even homosexuality, concludes with the confession: "In writing this book I have sinned indeed! / Your pardon, oh Lord, I surely shall need; / But if on the last day you absolve me, why then, / All my readers will join me / in a loud AMEN!" (92), a likely editorial edition.

¹⁷ Editor's Note: In fact, the general trend is to defer to the Divine at all times. For example, in Egypt, to express good wishes to someone before or during Ramaḍān, you say, *Ramaḍān karīm* [Gracious Ramaḍān] to which the response is *Allāhu Akram* [Allāh is More Gracious] (Nydehl 91).

¹⁸ Editor's Note: In Iran, for example, the two main slogans during the Islāmic Revolution were *Allāhu Akbar* and *lā ilāha illā Allāh*. These two symbolically charged phrases expressed discontent with the monarchy, opposition to oppression, the sovereignty of the Supreme over all affairs, the readiness to die for Islām, and total commitment to the cause of establishing an Islāmic Republic with the Qur'ān as its constitution. In Palestine, the cry *Allāhu Akbar* is even made by those who follow the directives of the secular P.L.O. (Balta 196).

¹⁹ Editor's Note: There are other variables to this ritualized routine. When someone sneezes the person says *alḥamdulillāh*, the other responds *Raḥimaka Allāh*, to which the person who sneezed responds *Raḥimanā wa raḥimakum*.

²⁰ Editor's Note: Holmes would thus be correct that politeness formulas serve as "social lubricants," acting to increase or consolidate the solidarity between the speaker and the addressee" (486). This greeting of peace, however, was not embraced by the Medinan Jews in the time of the Prophet. In fact, rather than saying *al-salāmu 'alaykum* to the Prophet, they used to greet him with *al-sāmmu 'alaykum* or "May death [lit. "poison"] be upon you" (Muslim).

²¹ Editor's Note: The Prophet's attitude of respect towards the female gender is in sad contrast to the common Arab custom of making cat-calls to women as they pass by. As the Messenger of Allāh warned, "Beware of sitting along roadsides." His Companions asked him, "Oh, Messenger of Allāh! We cannot stop these meetings on roadsides where we talk about different matters." The Messenger of Allāh said: "If you refuse to stop having such meetings, then you should give the road its rights." They asked him, "What are the rights of the road?" He said, "To cast down your eyes; to forbear harms to others; to reply to salutation, to enjoin what is right and to forbid what is wrong" (Bukhārī). On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, the Prophet commanded his followers to: "Observe your duty to Allah with respect to women, and treat them well," echoing the Qur'ānic commandment to treat women kindly (4:19).

²² As Imām Ḥusayn (d. 680) acknowledged:

The Messenger of Allāh used to salute women and they used to reply his salutation. While the Commander of the Faithful, Imām 'Alī, also used to salute women, he disliked to salute young women and said, 'I feared that her voice would stir me, earning me more sin than reward.' (Kulaynī).

²³ Editor's Note: It is reported that the Prophet used to pray for forgiveness seventy or one hundred times a day by repeating the formula "I ask forgiveness from Allāh." The Messenger of Allāh and the other Infallibles repented to Allāh in their conditions as servants of the Almighty, their inadequacies as creatures and for their existence as separate beings (Chittick xxx-xxxiv). Regardless of the objections of the Wahhābīs and Salafīs, "[t]he doctrine of the sinlessness of prophets has...always been an admitted principle among Muslims" ('Alī 232).

²⁴ Editor's Note: This is the paradox in which the Allāh Lexicon continues to exist, that is, a phrase that is at once formula and genuinely sincere. It seems that this issue was recognized as far back as the Prophet.

²⁵ Editor's Note: As Devin J. Stewart explains, cognate curses, root-echo responses to a number of common verbs and expressions, "are an important type of Egyptian formulaic speech with parallels in classical Arabic and other modern Arabic dialects" (327-28). However, "God rarely appears as agent in the cognate curses" (350). In fact, "God is the direct agent in only five curses in the corpus," a feature which stands in marked contrast to common blessings such as *Allāh yuhallik*, "May Allāh preserve you," *rabbina mayihirmnāsh minnak*, "May Allāh not deprive us of you," where Allāh is most often, though not invariably, the agent as in *Allāh yusallimak*, "May Allāh keep you safe" or *Allāh yin'im 'alayk*, "May Allāh bless you" (333). In contrast to English and Québécois French, there are only a few curses against religion in the Arabic language (Masliyah 2001: 288).

²⁶ Editor's Note: The best sources for prophetic curses and condemnations are books referring to the apocalypse and the hereafter, for example, *The Spectacle of Death Including Glimpes of Life Beyond the Grave*, by Khawaja Moḥammad Islām.

²⁷ Editor's Note: All of this despite the Prophet's declarations that "Loving 'Alī is belief and hating him is hypocrisy" (Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Tirmidhī, Ṣaddūq, Mufīd, and Kulaynī), "He who curses 'Alī, curses me" (Hākīm, Aḥmad, and Nasā'ī), "He who insults 'Alī, insults me. He who insults me, insults Allāh. And he who insults Allāh, Allāh will cast him into Hell" (Hākīm, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad, Ṭabarī, and Suyūṭī), as well as hundreds of similar sayings too lengthy to cite.

²⁸ Editor's Note: These condemned curses may form part of pre-Islāmic paganism which was perpetuated by the *munāfiqīn* or hypocrites, Muslims who professed Islām but who remained

heathens in their hearts, eagerly anticipating any opportunity to undermine it. Despite Masliyah's claims that these curses "have lost their original meaning and denote astonishment or an exclamation" (2001: 288), they continue to be perceived as offensive by religious people and educated speakers of the language. In truth, it seems difficult to believe that a sincere believer would ever curse Allāh and the religion of Allāh. While they may be used by ignorant Muslims, they may have been coined by infidels or pseudo-Muslims. Some of these forbidden curses may also trace back to the reciprocal cursing which was an inseparable accompaniment to war among the pagan Arabs.

²⁹ Editor's Note: Those who hold that the prayer beads are an innovation include the Wāḥḥābīs / Salafīs and some Qadianī scholars like Muḥammad 'Alī who claims that "There is...no authority whatever for the practice of repeating these names on a rosary or otherwise" (162). The general view, however, among *ahl al-bayt*, *ahl al-sunnah* and *ahl al-ṣūf* is that prayer beads were prophetically permitted.

³⁰ Editor's Note: The use of the divine name *Raḥmān* may have meant to appeal to Jews, the Arab monotheists, known as the Ḥanīf, and the southern Arabian Sabaeans. As Mansfield explains in *The Arab World: A Comprehensive History*, "By the fourth century AD the people of southern Arabia abandoned polytheism to adopt their own form of monotheism, a belief in a supreme god known as al-Raḥmān, 'the Merciful'" (16). Interestingly enough, *Raḥmana* is the Aramaic name for God used in the Babylonian Talmud. Compiled around 600, the work contains materials from the first couple of centuries CE (or perhaps even a tad before) in Hebrew. It also contains later material which is partially in Hebrew but largely in Aramaic. While it would not be worthwhile to count the Hebrew names of God in the Talmud since most of these would simply be in Biblical quotations, a search of the word *Raḥmana* in Michael Carasik's computerized concordance found 1,601 occurrences.

³¹ Editor's Note: When some irreligious Moroccan women are asked why they flaunt their beauty, appearing in public in sexually provocative clothing, they often cite this saying sarcastically to justify their Islāmically-inappropriate demeanor.

³² Editor's Note: Other, non-scriptural, oaths expressing veneration for Allāh include *wa illī farraj aṣāb 'ak*, by the One who differentiated between your fingers, *wa al-khallāk timshi 'alā al-jā*, by the One who made you walk the ground, *wa lladhī jarā hadhā al-mā*, by the One who made this water flow, and *wa rabb al-kā'ināt*, by the Lord of the creatures, among many more, all of which are used in Iraq (Masliyah 94). Piamenta also points to the following Divine Names which are not found *ad litteram* in the Scripture: *al-Dā'im*, "The Everlasting," related to *al-Qayyūm* and *al-Bāqī*; *al-Sayyid*, "The Master;" al-Sultān, "The Absolute Ruler," and *al-Jamīl*, "The Beautiful" (38-39). As al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) explains in *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, "when an expression which does not suggest [any imperfection] at all among those who share a common understanding it taken to be true of God, and when revelation does not expressly forbid it, then we freely permit its being applied to God" (181). The followers of *qiyās* use logic and chose divine names by "analogy" with other established ones (De la Torre 22). This does not mean that the names are synonymous, but rather each name, in itself, brings a new shade of meaning of the divine essence (22). As al-Ghazālī explains, "it is unlikely that the names included in the ninety-nine be synonymous since names are not intended for their letters or external differences, but rather for their meanings" (1999: 26). Purificación de la Torre further elucidates that, "Estos teólogos no descartan en absoluto el importante peso que el Corán y los hadices tienen a la hora de la elección de los Nombres, pero ellos añaden la posibilidad de aplicar la lógica para poder explicar el por qué de un Nombre u otro" (22) [These theologians do not downplay the important role the Qur'ān and the *ahādīth* have when it comes to selecting names, but they add the possibility of applying logic in order to explain the reason for one name or another]. The use of analogy was opposed by the partisans of *tawqīf* who held that the only names of Allāh are those

which He has attributed to Himself ; in other words, the only acceptable names are those found in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah (De la Torre 22)

³³ Editor's Note: The significance of names in general, and Arabic names in particular, is addressed in our article "¿Qué hay en un nombre árabe?"

³⁴ Editor's Note: In 1948, there were 135 to 150,000 Jews in Iraq. Up to 120,000 of them left the country in the early 1950s and most of the rest during the 1960s and 1970s. By 2003, there were only one to two hundred Jews left in Iraq, and many of those were relocated to Israel by American troops.

³⁵ Editor's Note: A good source of Shī'ite curses is "Some Imāmī Shī'ī Views on the Ṣaḥābah" found in Etan Kohlberg's *Belief and Law in Imāmī Shī'ism*.

³⁶ Editor's Note: In Nelson's study of Syrian and American speakers of Arabic living in Damascus, she found that "Syrian interlocutors frequently used religious expressions, whereas none of the Americans did so" (430 note 4). Regardless of their level of fluency in Arabic, the Americans will forever be identified as foreigners for failing to use phrases of faith.

Failure to use the proper Allāh expression can be particularly perilous for unbelievers feigning to be Muslims. In one case, a non-Muslim from Kenya was captured by a Somali militia as a spy. Having heard that the Somalis do not kill Muslim captives, he insisted that he was Muslim. His captors asked him to say the *shahādah*. He responded by saying *al-salāmu 'alaykum*, upon which he was killed. While the lack of *salām* can lead to slaughter, the *salām* can also save. In one case, a prisoner was being led to his execution. Upon passing the judge, he said *al-salāmu 'alaykum*, upon which the judge automatically replied, *wa 'alaykum al-salām*. The prisoner commented: "How can you punish me if you have given me the greeting of peace?" Recognizing the binding nature of the *salām* salutation, the judge pardoned the prisoner.

The *salām* greeting, as simple as it may seem, is often inappropriately employed by some English-speaking Muslim converts. In fact, it is common for many of these new Muslims to send their salaams to any Muslim they come across. While this might work in North America, it does not come across well in big Arab cities where the greeting *al-salāmu 'alaykum* is typically reserved for people one knows, and not complete strangers one encounters on the street, unless you wish to ask them a question.

³⁷ Editor's Note: It is evident that religious oaths are far more prevalent in Arabic than they are in English. While Ṣāliḥ and 'Abdul-Fattāḥ's study on "English and Arabic Oath Speech Acts" does a fair job of comparing speech acts in both languages, it leaves readers with the erroneous impression that their frequency and function are similar. They claim that:

It has been shown unequivocally that American English and Jordanian Arabic have many oath features in common in terms of the function and theme or object of the oath. Individuals in both languages swear by the Deity or by one or two of His Supreme attributes. They may also swear by the holy prophets, saints, and angels as well as by their own supreme ideals and values which may differ from one culture to the other. There are, however, some differences which arise mainly from the somewhat different beliefs, cultural practices and social norms as well as family relations in each culture. (123).

According to the authors, American English and Jordanian Arabic have "many" oath features in common and only "some" differences based on "somewhat" different beliefs, practices and norms. Clearly, this is not the case. Arabic and English do share *some* common expressions; however, in most cases, they are used with a radically different sense. When Muslims call upon Allāh or call

upon the Prophet, it is perceived as an act of piety. When Christians call upon God or Jesus Christ, namely, when they "swear," it is perceived pejoratively. From a frequency point of view, the evidence is in: the Arabic language employs the name *Allāh* far more than the English language employs the word *God*. So, from a qualitative and quantitative point of view, the differences between Arabic and English religious expression far outnumber the similarities. Furthermore, the vast majority of *Allāh* expressions are pragmatically untranslatable as they do not have equivalents in the English language. As Barbara Kryk has noted, interjections are highly language specific and lack exact equivalents across languages (195). In their study of 20 M.A. translation students on a translation task of 15 politeness formulas, Moḥammad Farghal and Aḥmed Borinī found that "many student translators could not render appropriately the Arabic euphemistic formulas" (13) and that "[m]any student translators could not grasp the distinction between what is formulaic and non-formulaic. Hence, they have either maintained the Arabic formulaic expression or just paraphrased it into English" (16), "student translators often adopt literal translation as a solution when they encounter difficulty in translating any formula," trying to "maintain the semantic import of the Arabic formula at the expense of the intended illocutionary force, which makes their renditions opaque and unintelligible to English readers" (16). As the authors explain,

Politeness formulas often tend to show some kind of divergence between the two languages in question. For instance, one very noticeable difference between English and Arabic formulas is the frequency of religious references in Arabic, while the corresponding polite formulas in English may not have such references. By way of illustration, a formula that may functionally correspond to English *Good bye* in Arabic is *Allāh ma'ak* [May God be with you] in a variety of contexts. (5)

According to Farghal and Borinī, a "deficiency in paralinguistic competence usually results in communication breakdown or, at least, distortion of the original message" (3). While a good translator could come up with an idiomatically acceptable replacement, the original sense of the expressions would almost always be lost.

Rare, indeed, are authors of the quality of Hergé, the Belgian author of the *Tintin* comic books, who, due to familiarity with Arabic culture, are capable of conveying *Allāh* expressions in European languages like French. *Coke en stock* and *Le crabe aux pinces d'or*, among others, include Arab characters uttering *Par Allāh* [By Allāh], *Le salam sur toi* [Peace be upon you] and the tongue-in-cheek *Par la barbe du Prophète* [By the beard of the Prophet]. Despite his cross-cultural dexterity, even Hergé succumbs to the anti-Arab sentiment of his time, depicting Arabs as terrorists.

³⁸ Editor's Note: An Arab, however, acquires *Allāh* expressions over the course of a lifetime. A child learning the language "can be presumed to extend his repertory by analogy" (Ferguson 43). Having heard these expressions many times, "the speaker of Syrian Arabic has the competence to use the root-echo pattern in linguistic contexts where he has never heard it before" (43).

³⁹ Editor's Note: Islām prohibits begging. As the Prophet said, "Nothing but Paradise must be begged for *Allāh's* sake" (Abū Dāwūd). At the same time, Muslims are not supposed to turn away beggars, especially when they invoke the name of Almighty *Allāh*, as they are encouraged to provide alms to the poor (2:196; 9:60).

⁴⁰ Editor's Note: Peter Mandaville echoes this view, explaining that "[t]here is a point beyond which discrimination and rejection by the majority society results not in Muslims' denial of their religion, but rather in its affirmation. Rejected and unwanted, they turn to that which sets them apart as a form of cultural self-assertion and a basis of identity. Islām also becomes a form of self-defense and a source of solidarity against a hostile dominant culture" (22).

⁴¹ Editor's Note: In their study on "Lebanese Immigrants in Australia," a survey of the language maintenance, erosion, and attrition rate of 62 immigrant children from Melbourne, Ronald Taft and Desmond Cahill found that while most of the subjects could speak Lebanese Arabic well, few could read or write it (129). This problem was further accentuated by the fact that most of the parents were either illiterate or semi-literate in Arabic: "only 47% of the fathers and 31% of the mothers could read it 'well,' only a quarter of the parents could write it 'well'" (134); and the alarming "absence of printed material in the language in most homes" (142) making it "virtually impossible for the children to develop literacy skills in other than English" (142). As a result, "English was clearly the dominant language of the children" (141) and "one third of the children have virtually no 'loyalty' to their mother tongue" (136). The most detrimental factor in the language development of the children was found to be illiterate mothers: "[t]he children of completely illiterate mothers--in any language--were inferior in all language skills, but especially in speaking" (139), which should serve as a warning that the inclination of some Arab men towards taking ignorant women as wives places the Islāmic identity of their children in peril. Although Muslim children represented only 14% of the subjects, the rest being Orthodox (12%) and Catholic (69%), with 4% refusing to identify their religion, it can be safely said that, in terms of language loss, what applies to the Christian Lebanese also applies to the Muslim, but to a lesser extent.

In his study of two Arab communities in New York, a Muslim Yemeni one and a Christian Lebanese one, Dweik found that second-generation Yemeni immigrants were successful in maintaining their native language. He attributes this retention to their high commitment to Islām as well as the Arabic language through a sense of sacredness resulting from the bond between language and religion. In contrast, Dweik found that second-generation Christian Lebanese had abandoned Arabic for English.

While Lebanese Christian immigrants may, over the course of couple of generations, entirely lose their Arabic, they will not lose their religion as they are in a predominantly Christian environment. It may be interesting to note here that it is not uncommon to meet Christian Lebanese who do not think of themselves as Arab at all, but rather Franks or even Phoenicians, etc. This is in great part due to the deep-seated distinction Aramaean-Christians and Arab-Muslims made for themselves during Islām's first thrust into the Levant, centuries ago. For the Muslims, the loss of the Arabic language sends them on a downwards spiral of decay away from their Islām. Since Muslims are the majority of the population in Lebanon and exert considerable influence, being illiterate in the homeland does not necessarily pose a threat to one's religious identity, which is absorbed through osmosis in an Islāmic cultural setting. In a non-Muslim country, however, illiteracy in Arabic leads to loss of language, culture and religion. In the United States, the rate of dissimulation from Arabic heritage and assimilation into American culture is even more severe. Case in point: Ghazi Shorrah's study of 28 Arab immigrant families in Buffalo, New York, "clearly demonstrate the children's inclination toward utilizing English and the rejection of Arabic" (83).

In his study of 58 Arab-American students attending a full-time private Arabic-Islāmic school in Dallas, Texas, 'Abdel Fattāḥ Banī Hānī found that "[t]he reduction in the use of Arabic is illustrated by a mean average of 2.79 on a 5-point Likert scale for the use of Arabic at home, and a mean average of 2.82 on a 5-point Likert scale for the use of Arabic with friends" (168). In simple terms, if parents speak Arabic to their children 100% of the time, their children will speak it 50% of the time and their grandchildren 0% of the time. While many factors are at play, his data demonstrates that:

children who have a stronger belief in the Islāmic faith and who show more commitment to Islām through preserving the daily prayers and other religious practices tend to use English substitutes less often and are hence considered more fluent in their native language than children who report a weaker belief in Islām and in the connection between Islām and Arabic, and who report less commitment to preserving Islāmic practices. (97)

Moreover, "the results illustrate that more usage of Arabic at home is associated with a higher level of children's commitment to their religion and less usage of Arabic at home is associated with a lower level of children's commitment to Islām" (104).

As 'Abdo A. Elkholy has stated in *The Arab Moslems in the United States*, "The Arabic language is an inseparable part of Islām" (qtd. in Turner Medhī 109). The loss of Arabic leads to the loss of Islām. Arabic-speaking Muslims have quite a challenge in front of them if they wish to preserve their language, culture, and religion. As Beverlee Turner Mehdī has observed, Arabs are characterized by the fact that "they have so easily assimilated" into American and Western culture (viii).

⁴² Editor's Note: We have discussed the antagonist attitude of the French government towards Muslims in our article "The Future of the French Language in Light of French Anti-Islāmism."

⁴³ Editor's Note: This would include the Fourteen Infallibles, the Prophet Muḥammad, his daughter Fāṭimah (d. 631-32) and the Twelve Imāms who spoke a special language all to their own. As Imām Khomeini pointed out, "The *ma'sūmīn*...also have their own language, and we must examine the language of each of the other four groups [the philosophers, the mystics, the jurists and the poets] to see which is the closest to the language of the *ma'sūmīn* and also to that of the Qur'ān" (416). Whether it is philosophy, mysticism, jurisprudence or poetry, in Islām, each specialized language must trace back to the Qur'ān. As Nwyia explains,

Si cela est vrai en art ou en philosophie, ce l'est encore plus en Islam, ou, précisément, la conscience religieuse ne prend naissance que pour autant qu'elle assimile un langage déterminé, celui-là même que lui fournit le Coran. En Islam, on le sait, tout part du Coran et tout doit ramener au Coran, et ce qui n'est pas tel est une nouveauté suspecte, sinon une infidélité inadmissible. C'est donc dans le Coran que prend naissance l'expérience mystique musulmane, et aussi technique qu'il soit ou qu'il le devienne, ce langage devra d'une manière ou d'une autre faire preuve de son origine coranique, sinon quant à sa forme, du moins dans son contenu (22).

[If it's true in art or in philosophy, it is even more so in Islām where, precisely, religious consciousness only develops by assimilating a determined language, the very one provided by the Qur'ān. In Islām, as we know, everything comes from the Qur'ān and everything must trace back to the Qur'ān; that which does not is a suspicious innovation if not an unacceptable expression of infidelity. It is in the Qur'ān, then, that the Muslim mystical experience comes to life. Regardless of how technical it is or it becomes, this language must, in one way or another, demonstrate its Qur'ānic origin, if not in its form then in its content.]

The Allāh Lexicon, as a specialized language, traces back to the Qur'ān in both content and form. As Stewart has noted, some of the paired phrases of cognate curses exhibit near-rhyme, an artistic speech which is common in the Qur'ān (336).

⁴⁴ Editor's Note: The following dialogue between Fiḍḍah and 'Abdullāh bin al-Mubārak is found in the following sources: al-Qushayrī's *Risālah*, Majlisī's *Bihār al-anwār*, and Ibn Shahrāshūb's *Manāqib al Abī Ṭālib*:

I saw a woman passing through the desert who had fallen behind the caravan. I asked her: "Who are you and where are you from?" She said: "Say *salām!*... 'Soon shall ye know it'" (6:67). I learned that she expected me to say *al-salāmu 'alaykum* prior to asking questions. I did as she reminded and inquired why she was in this desert. She answered: "And such as Allāh doth guide there can be none to lead astray" (39:37). I gathered that she had been left behind and was restless, so I asked again: "Are you a human being or jinn?" She replied: "O Children of Adam! Wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer" (7:31). I discovered that she was a human being, so I continued my enquiry, "Where are you coming from?" She said: "They are being called from a place far distant" (41:44). I found out that she was coming from a place far off and inquired her destination. She immediately responded: "Pilgrimage thereto is a duty men owe to Allāh" (3:97). I realized that she was performing the Pilgrimage and asked her how many days she had been travelling? She told me: "We created the heavens and the earth and all between them in six days" (7:54; 50:38). I concluded that it had been six days. I offered her food and water if she was so inclined. She politely indicated: "Nor did We give them bodies that ate no food, nor were they exempt from death" (21:8). She accepted my refreshment. Then to catch the caravan, I suggested to her that she make haste. She reminded me again: "On no soul doth Allāh place a burden greater than it can bear" (2:286). I told her that if she could not do so that she could ride on the back of my camel behind me. She recited another Qur'ānic Verse: "If there were, in the heavens and the earth, other gods besides Allāh, there would have been confusion in both" (21:22). It was a pious reminder that unmarried men and women were forbidden from riding together on the same animal. [Qashīrī says that he got down and requested her to ride the camel.] She occupied the seat and recited: "Glory be to Him who has subjected these [animals] to our (use)" (43:13). She thanked Allāh who brought the animal under her control. When we reached the caravan, I asked her: "Do you know any one among them?" She recounted: "O Dāwūd! We did indeed make thee a viceregent on earth" (38:26); "And Muḥammad is no more than a Messenger" (3:144); "O Yahya! Take hold of the Book with might!" (19:12); "O Mūsā! Verily I am Allāh, Exalted in Might, the Wise!" (27:9). I understood that Dāwūd, Muḥammad, Yahya and Mūsā were the names of her sons. When the boys appeared, I asked her who they were. She said in her habitual manner: "Wealth and sons are allurements of the life of this world" (18:46). I recognized them as her sons. The woman looked at her sons with the feeling of contentment and uttered "O my father! Engage him on wages: truly the best of men for thee to employ is the one who is strong and trustworthy" (28:26). With these words from the Qur'ān, she informed her sons that "This man offered me a help, so verily, 'Allāh giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth'" (2:261). The sons grasped their mother's indications, and so they paid me twice as much as I ought to have been paid. To satisfy my curiosity I asked the sons: "Who is this honorable Lady that speaks nothing but the Qur'ān?" They responded that she was their mother, the housemaid of Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', the daughter of the Holy Prophet and the Wife of Amīr al-Mu'minīn. She was raised under the shade of supreme knowledge and piety of the daughter of the Prophet. For the past twenty years, she has spoken nothing but the Qur'ān in her daily conversations.

⁴⁵ Editor's Note: For more on language as it relates to foreign policy, see our following articles: "*Amoo Sam beh madreseh miravad*: Defense Language Institute Program as an Indicator of U.S Foreign Policy;" "El idioma árabe en camino de convertirse en un arma contra el Islam," and "La enseñanza de idiomas y la política exterior."

⁴⁶ Editor's Note: The last Moriscos disappeared from Spain in the 1800s. Unlike their cousins of the Jewish faith who have been persecuted since ancient times, Muslims have not developed the same resilience and skills required to survive in times of genocide.

⁴⁷ Editor's Note: Mustafâ Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the Turkish soldier and statesman, was the founder and first president of the Republic of Turkey. He contributed to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire and abolished the Caliphate in 1924. As a result, Islâm ceased to be a political force in the world. He closed theological schools and replaced the *sharî'ah* with a law code based on the Swiss legal code, the German penal code, and the Italian commerce code. He outlawed traditional Islâmîc headdress for men and insisted that all Turks wear European style hats, executing hundreds of pious Muslims to make the point. He banned the *hijâb* and encouraged women to wear western dress and enter the work force. In 1928, in an effort to distance the people from the Qur'ân, the government decreed that the Arabic script was to be replaced by a modified Latin alphabet. All citizens from six to 40 years of age were obliged to attend school to learn the new alphabet. The Turkish language was "purified" by the removal of Arabic and Persian words and replaced by new Turkish ones. He even obliged the muezzins to make the call to prayer in Turkish as opposed to Arabic. Mustafâ Kemal opened art schools so that boys and girls could engage in the visual representation of human forms, which had been banned during Ottoman times. Atatürk, who was most fond of the national liquor, *rakı*, and consumed vast quantities of it, legalized alcohol which is strictly forbidden in Islâm. In 1934, he required all Turks to adopt western style surnames. Ironically, after waging war against the Turkish culture and religion, he adopted the name Kemal Atatürk meaning "father of the Turks." He died in 1938 of cirrhosis of the liver, the result of years of excessive drinking. He left Turkey with a divided identity, trapped between East and West, Europeanized but not quite European, alienated from the Islâmîc world but still a Muslim country.

⁴⁸ Editor's Note: The attempt to purify the Persian language of Arabic loan-words and replace the Arabic-based Persian alphabet with the Latin one was part of the Shah's "white revolution." The Shah may have been inspired by earlier efforts by Aḥmad Kasravî, a Persian historian who lived between 1888 and 1945. In a series of polemical works, including *Şuḡigari* and *Shiagari*, he attacked both Şūfîsm and Shî'ism, accusing them of being sources of superstition and backwardness. He also attempted to promote a "Pure Persian," replacing words of Arabic origin with others he invented (Muṭahharî, Tabâtabâ'î, and Khumaynî 192). Despite being a good writer, Kasravî became arrogant and went to the extreme of calling himself a prophet (184) and attempting to spread a pseudo-religion called Pak-Dîn, the Pure Religion (192). He was assassinated by Navvab Safavî, founder of *Fidayan Islâm*, an organization which sought to establish an Islâmîc political constitution in Iran (192). Like the Shah of Iran, Spanish royalty also attempted to replace Arabic loan words with Latin ones. Despite such efforts, thousands of Arabic words remain in the Spanish language, representing 8% of its lexicon.

⁴⁹ Editor's Note: Surprisingly, this seems to have escaped Ayâtullâh Muṭahharî, who when confronted with the proposal to change the Persian script to the Latin one, claimed that Islâm does not have one alphabet in particular and that "A los ojos del Islam, que es una religión universal, todos los alfabetos son iguales" (76) [In the eyes of Islâm, a universal religion, all alphabets are equal]. He did, however, express some concern as to the effect the change in script might have on Muslim society and whether it would result in cultural alienation, considering that Persian scientific and Islâmîc literature has used an Arabic-based alphabet for 14 centuries (76-77). He also called for an investigation into who was behind the proposal and how it would be implemented, indicating that he may have harbored some suspicions regarding the matter.

⁵⁰ Editor's Note: As Ferguson has observed, "the profusion of thank yous, good wishes, and the like of Arabic society is being reduced to the models of French and English usage" (68). In many large Arabic cities, the greeting *al-salâmu 'alaykum*, the very symbol of Islâm, is sometimes viewed with contempt and its speaker dismissed as an *arubî*, a backwards peasant, by "sophisticated" Westernized Arabs who employ "Allo," "Bonjour," "Hi," and "Hello."

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Chapter 4

Transfer of Essential Phrases into Second Language Use

By Barbara Castleton

1. Introduction

1.1 The Importance of Language

In the words of Albert Hourānī, the Arabs are “[m]ore conscious of their language than any people in the world, seeing it not only as the greatest of their arts, but also as their common good” (1962: 1). They cherish their language in all its diversity. For them, language is bound to identity so strongly, that as Hourānī asserts, they cannot define who they are without the predominant mention of Arabic as a tie that binds them to identity, history, and religion. Suleimān agrees, stating that “What makes an Arab an Arab...is his or her membership in an Arabic-speaking community that is as much defined by its attitude of reverence towards the language as it is by actual linguistic behavior” (2003: 225).

Like Amharic, Aramaic, and Hebrew, Arabic is one of the Semitic languages, one in which a pattern of three sound morphemes form the roots of a vast selection of variations. One example is the verb “to sit down” which consists of three sounds in a distinctive pattern *JaLaSa*, with the short vowel for /a/ between each consonantal sound. This same root, or *fiʿl* [verb], remains present as the root undergoes a variety of changes.

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. <i>aJLaSa</i> | to seat someone |
| 2. <i>JiLSah</i> | manner of sitting |
| 3. <i>JuLūS</i> | [the act of] sitting down |
| 4. <i>'iJLiS!</i> | Sit down! |
| 5. <i>JaLSah</i> | meeting or gathering |
| 6. <i>JaLiS</i>
<i>JaLiSah</i> | companion; participant in a social gathering [feminine is |
| 7. <i>maJāLiS</i> | sessions or councils / <i>maJLiS</i> = sing. |
| 8. <i>muJāLaSah</i> | social exchange or communication. (Seikaly 3) |

Within Arabic are two principal elements. The first of these is classical Arabic, the language which elevated an ancient oral tradition used to pass on history, stories, and poetry into a revered written form, and the channel by which the Qur'ān was transmitted. Due to classical Arabic's supremacy, the ability to use it proficiently raised a man's stature and was often the determinative key to his reputation in the community. By virtue of descriptive skill, historical recall, poetic transmission, and judicial oath, the language has continued to serve Arabic speakers as a linguistic yardstick, simultaneously calculating both their worth and the depth of their roots in the culture.

Note should be made, however, that many Arabic-speaking countries retain colonial or economic ties to other world languages. In Lebanon, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, French remains a language of influence, though Shaaban and Gaith report that its influence is diminishing in Lebanon "as the dominant language of cultural activities and education and that a fresh pattern of language use is emerging in which Arabic is used mainly for everyday communication and basic cultural activities" (561). In Morocco, despite the standing of the home vernacular as the "mother tongue and *lingua franca*," "it is impossible to function effectively [in various venues] without a command of French" (Ṣadīqī 37).

In today's Arabic-speaking societies, classical Arabic has developed a modern version, known as Modern Standard Arabic. It is this Arabic, with its complex sets of tagsets and aspects of nunation (Khoja, Barside, and Knowles 2-3), as well as the Semitic language detail of inheritance, "where all subclasses of words inherit properties from the classes they are derived" (1) that is heard on the evening news, in speeches from kings and government officials, and read in newspapers. Ḥāerī, when reporting on what constituted the final authority on "good English," discovered that "[a]lmost invariably [informants] respond that 'time' is the ultimate authority. Once a usage becomes prevalent, it must be, and is, accepted as the correct one" (June 14, 2003). In contrast to this process, for Arabic, the Qur'ān has been and remains the pre-eminent authority on Arabic.¹

The second form of Arabic is actually multiple in its manifestations, existing as the dialects which rule daily life and communication in Arabic-

speaking countries. So distinct are these vernaculars that a native of Egypt may not understand the *dārijah* or parlance of Morocco, despite their membership in, as Kaye states, a “dialect continuum” (118).² In fact, both Morocco’s and Egypt’s dialects differ from classical Arabic and MSA [Modern Standard Arabic] in canonical word order, the presence or absence of case, pronoun forms, relative pronoun forms, plus the manner of conjugation and negation (Ḥāerī 2003). In addition, the phrases and words for situations and items will vary between the vernacular and MSA and immediately identify the mode of speech as either dialectal or classical.

Yet, because of the Qur’ān and the stability of its classical form, educated Arabs everywhere are able, if necessary, to communicate at least partially through the use of classical Arabic’s modern equivalent.³ In addition, despite the variations region to region and country to country, all Arabic vernaculars are linguistically related to classical Arabic and MSA in ways that tie all its speakers together.⁴ Given the recognized supremacy of Qur’ānic Arabic, anyone who honors that form, even in their prayers, and perhaps only in their prayers, is nevertheless a member of the broader Arabic-speaking community. In support of this tolerance, al-Khaṭīb reports the opinion of Shouby who believed that “literary [classical] Arabic can be linked to the ideal self and colloquial Arabic to the real self of the Arab psyche” (2001: 187).

Were it not for Islām, and the original divine transmission of the Qur’ān in Arabic, the classical form of the language might have gone the way of Latin, ancient Greek and Sanskrit, namely into the realm of sacred yet largely dead languages. Yet, because Islām and classical Arabic are so closely and dependently bound, this form of Arabic is the official language of all Arab countries, regardless of the spoken variants heard in the streets, in movies, or in the homes of citizens.

1.2 Islām and the Allāh Lexicon

Classical Arabic is the language of faith, history, identity and religion. This reality, that Arabic was the means of the message, is one which Arabs themselves use to add both credence and mystery to the teachings of the Qur’ān.

Linguistic legitimacy is given by a verse which states, “We have sent down an Arabic Qur’ān” (12:2), demonstrating Allāh’s desire that His word become known to the people through Arabic and continue to be proclaimed in that language. Arabs themselves are quick to point out the beauty and intricacy of the Qur’ān as being so sublime that it cannot ever be adequately translated nor even fully understood by the most accomplished Arabic scholar.⁵

Over the fourteen plus centuries since Muḥammad received the Qur’ān in Arabic, the classical form of the language has stretched far beyond the Arab world. Muslims believe that classical Arabic is the only correct vehicle for worship, so “regardless of native tongue, a believing Muslim must know some classical Arabic in order to read the holy text, to perform the daily prayers and to carry out other religious rituals and obligations” (Hāerī 2003: npn).

Along with the Qur’ān, the Allāh Lexicon came into being with the advent of Islām. It obliges all Muslims to express their recognition of Allāh’s omnipotence using phrases that glorify His existence and works. As we will see later in this work, the umbrella aspect of the Allāh Lexicon offers a contrastive view of the speech acts studies of Blum-Kulka (1982), Walters (1981), Cohen and Olshtain (1987), to name a few. In those investigations, researchers looked at the speech acts themselves, and determined how they were accommodated in general discourse. In the case of the Allāh Lexicon, we have instead reviewed a selection of phrases and observed how they fit into a variety of speech acts, arriving at the conclusion that the lexicon itself is the source of speech act constituents.

Over many centuries, these words and phrases have developed into a bouquet of appropriate responses to any instance life might offer. Just as spices add nuance and substance to foods, the Allāh Lexicon and all of components bring place, faith, connection, caring, and compassion to every interaction. The legitimacy of identifying a selection of phrases as part of a class called the Allāh Lexicon stems from the work of John Locke, who explained how categories are logically collected and identified:

But yet I think we may say, the sorting of them under names is the workmanship of the understanding, taking occasion, from the similitude it observes amongst them, to make abstract general ideas, and set them up in the mind, with names annexed to them, as patterns or forms, (for, in that sense, the word form has a very proper signification), to which as particular things existing are found to agree, so they come to be of that species, have that denomination, or are put into that class. (1690)

As will be seen in this study, the phrases and words of the Allāh Lexicon can likewise be gathered, named, and their distinctions made clear, while yet linking them by purpose and origination.

A variety of verses in the Qur'ān call for all believers to remember Allāh in all their daily activities and their plans for the future. As has been seen from the list of phrases from the Allāh Lexicon exemplified in this book, remembering Allāh requires mentioning one of His many names, identifying His limitless characteristics, asking for His support or aid, and offering Him gratitude. In the Qur'ān are frequent examples calling on believers to remember Allāh in all their dealings. A few examples of these cautions and directives come from numerous chapters in the Qur'ān. These include Sūrat al-A'raf [The Heights], which reads: "Mūsā said to his people: Ask help from Allāh and be patient" (7:128); and "Allāh's are the best names, therefore call on Him thereby" (7:180) as well as Sūrat al-'Anfāl [The Spoils of War], which states that "Those only are believers whose hearts become full of fear when Allāh is mentioned" (8:2). From these two verses, the lexicon phrases of *Allāh yi'awn* [Allāh helps] and *subhān Allāh* [Glory be to Allāh] arose. Another verse, this one from Sūrat al-Kahf [The Cave], also prompts the faithful to remember Allāh when they speak of plans and events in the future (18:23-24) It is from this verse that the oft-used word *inshā' Allāh* is believed to have come into prominence, bringing transparency to the triad that is Arabic, Islām, and Muslim. With that interdependence and linked identity, Arabic has been established, as Fishman outlines, as a "chosen and beloved language [which has] claimed and created an association and identity that are simultaneously experienced as eternally, creatively and inspirationally inseparable" (1996: 12).

Ironically, it is around this phrase, *inshā' Allāh* [If Allāh wills], and others with a similar pragmatic component, such as *tawakkaltu 'alā Allāh* [I put myself in Allāh's care or hands], that one of the greatest misunderstandings about Arabic culture and Islām arises. Westerners and non-Muslims often assume that phrases such as *inshā' Allāh* [If Allāh wills] and a *tawakkaltu 'alā Allāh* are indicative of a predisposition toward fatalism in Islām.⁶ Yet, such a hypothesis denies the continuous Islāmic tradition of reason or '*aql*' which contradicts the notion of throwing up one's hands and leaving everything to Allāh (Mernissi).⁷ Without attempting to thoroughly examine the topic of free will versus divine intervention, the Allāh Lexicon itself gives a hint of the complexity of this dilemma.⁸ Referencing *tawakkaltu 'alā Allāh* [I put myself in Allāh's care or hands], we see a verb phrase that does not easily translate into English. It must be noted, however, that in Arabic this form of the verb is not strictly passive. Herein, while invoking Allāh, the speaker also intends to take whatever action is necessary to ensure success. Yet, he or she understands that the final result exists within Allāh's will. Then again, if the speaker were intending not to take any responsibility for the outcome nor perform any action on behalf of the goal, then he or she would need to use a strictly passive form of the verb which is essentially unheard of. This phrase, with a change in the vowelings, would hand over complete accountability to Allāh and would be uttered *tawākkaltu 'alā Allāh* [I am in Allāh's care or hands]. In actuality, this does not occur, and Muslims live in the same sort of paradox that Christians do, that of having free will and knowing that there is a supreme being capable of creating all things in heaven and earth and managing the lives of humans. How different is it for someone commiserating with a Christian parent on the death of their child to say, "God has called him home," versus a Muslim friend extending *innā lillāhi wa innā ilayhi rāji'ūn* [To Allāh we belong, and to Him is our return] in the same situation?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Use of the Lexicon

Bound tightly within the language, phrases from the Allāh Lexicon have historically been used throughout daily activities, including interactions in the market, in business, in sickness, in bereavement, on visits, at weddings, in greetings and farewells, in declarations and speeches, and in song and poetry. They also became a means to demonstrate the veracity of someone's word. In describing the downfall of a petitioner to the Ottoman courts in Damascus, Syria, James Grehan relates how, because of a refusal to utter a required oath consisting of a familiar God-referenced phrase, the plaintiff revealed to the judge his guilt, and thereby lost the case. Despite the risk and because "in many ways, people were only as good as their word" (991), the plaintiff dared not perjure himself. The legal punishment for such an act would have been minor compared to the social devastation.

Grehan does not mention which phrase from the Allāh Lexicon was required, but there is little doubt that the oath could have claimed membership in the lexicon. Oaths which contained mention of Allāh or one of His Names were held to be inviolable. This was true not only in the judicial arena, but also elsewhere in life where oaths and swearing proliferated. "Far bolder," Grehan asserts, "and less in doubt, were oaths sworn in the name of God, which made them iron-clad" (1002). Such oaths might have included *uqsimu billāh* [I swear by Allāh] or *wa Allāh* [by Allāh], both of which have been in continuous use over time.

El-Sayed, in reviewing how Allāh phrases are utilized as part of politeness formulas in Egypt, noted how "speech acts differ cross-culturally in their distribution, function, and frequency of occurrence" (2). Such information opened the door to recognition that the types of expressions so frequently used by native Arabic speakers in their own language may not exist in a parallel configuration in another language, such as English. They may be altered or pragmatically diminished in the transfer process as well as through changes in context: "It has been pointed out that whatever the quantity, the frequency, or the degree of

fixedness of formulas in a pair of languages, we are likely to find instances where a fixed formula in one language is not readily paired with any corresponding formula in the other” (5).

This difference also arises in correspondence, where, in Arabic, though letter writers could use either the local dialect or MSA, tradition dictates that the topic of the letter, the situation under which it is written, and the identity of the receiver determines which form will be used. Yet, al-Khaṭīb found that regardless of the subject of the letter or the receiver, one of the conventions habitually followed is the use of the supplication, “In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful” (2001: 190). *Alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to Allāh] is often inserted just following (Ṣafar). *Inshā’ Allāh* [As Allāh wills it], too, makes a frequent appearance in letters written in Arabic, upholding in those missives the requirement to honor Allāh’s involvement in the success of all goals, wishes, and plans. One example from al-Khaṭīb’s study on letter writing is as follows: “I am looking forward to meeting you soon in ‘Ammān, *inshā’ Allāh*” (2001: 191). The inclusion of these items from the lexicon establishes the writer’s understanding of acceptable practice while it confirms his or her piety. There is also the implication through this use that everything the writer has written in the letter can be weighted with more truth than might otherwise be assured (191).

Swearing in Arabic, which is actually a noun form called *al-qasam*, is the topic of a work by ‘Abd el-Jawād, wherein he reveals a wide range of phrases which take the name of Allāh to heart. Swearing here is used in its traditional meaning of calling on a supreme power, force, or object to witness the veracity of one’s word, versus the more current and profane meaning of emitting pejorative and demeaning verbiage. The speech act of taking an oath has been a part of universal cultural expression throughout time. The Romans swore on Jupiter, Catholics sometimes “by my sainted mother,” or “all that’s holy,” and witnesses in court going as far back as the 16th century swore on the Bible (220).

Swearing and the taking of an oath are intended to inextricably bind the swearer to his or her word, and demand that they honor the might of the deity or symbol upon which they swear. Hughes describes the higher form of swearing,

rather than the profane, when he says,

From the high, dualistic perspective, it is language in its most highly charged state, infused with a religious force recognizable in the remote modes of the spell, the charm of the curse, forms seeking to invoke a higher power to change the world, or support the truthfulness of a claim. (1991: 4)

He goes on to detail the manner of traditional swearing through the use of phrasal verbs such as: “swear by,” “swear to,” “swear on,” “swear at,” and “swear that” [something is true]. It is natural, given its import in community life, that this speech act would elicit items from the Allāh Lexicon and be broadly represented in conversational swearing in Arabic-speaking countries (1991).

‘Abd el-Jawād outlines how Allāh appears in Arabic oaths as the object of a prepositional phrase which generally begins with “By the,” followed by a revered characteristic of the deity, and ending with the name Allāh. Examples of this pattern include *wa ‘izzat Allāh*, “By the glory of Allāh,” and *wa karam Allāh*, “By the generosity of Allāh” (2000: 223). Using many of the same referents in a different position, the oath could also be constructed with “By Allāh” in the initial position, followed by the attribute, in other words, *wa Allāhi al-‘Azīm* [By Allāh, the Almighty]. In addition to exploring the forms of oaths and swearing, ‘Abd el-Jawād categorized the speech acts in which oaths referencing Allāh might take place. Offering further evidence of the versatility of the Allāh Lexicon, these functions are many: declarations and assertions; promises and pledges; invitations and offers; apologies and excuses; threats and challenges; requests; accusations; praise and complaints.

Another class of discourse where the Allāh Lexicon is utilized and one in which many of the phrases used in our study completed in the year 2000 appear frequently, is in the area of social honorifics. Farghal states that “human languages are meant to meet the social and psychological needs of their native speakers, and in fact, they are, with no exceptions, strikingly capable of performing this all-pervasive undertaking” (163). Social honorifics, or those

phrases by which communication is eased and which create a bridge, in fact, from the speaker to the listener, are actually “encoding...social information [through] linguistic behavior...They may...be regarded as the clearest example of social meaning” (164).

Naturally, there are standard forms of honorifics in every culture, from “Mister” and the more recent “Ms.” in English to *Madame* or *Monsieur le Directeur* in French. These *absolute honorifics* (Levinson 90) are so fixed in some Arab cultures that when university students are offered the option of addressing foreign instructors by their first names, they consistently add a “Mister” or “Miss” as a preface. Other students cannot bend their habits as far as using a given name and insist on using the honorific and the surname. When the same students are offered the additional choice of “Ms.,” which requires extensive cultural explanation, students are often comfortable enough with this new variation to adopt it. These absolute honorifics are social signifiers of rank or status and are offered out of respect. However, they might also be extended in the case of teachers who address their students as “Mr.” or “Miss so and so,” out of a desire to raise the listener to a desired level of behavior or performance.

However, conversational honorifics in Arabic go beyond that sphere. Farghal describes referent or situational honorifics in Arabic that refer to Allāh and call His attention to some mundane or profound life issue.

<i>Honorific</i>	<i>Phrase</i>	<i>Situation</i>
1. Referent	“May Allāh have mercy on him”	Death
2. Situational	“May Allāh augment your reward”	Condolences
3. Negation	“May Allāh not bestow anything on you”	Resentment (166)

Farghal explains that a contextual understanding is requisite for the appropriate use of honorifics and that their use is less choice than prescribed. Certain types of honorifics may be offered as a response to a verbalized comment or, in the case of those above, based on a non-verbal feature of the actual discourse. For example, in the case of #2 above, the receiver might not have actually mentioned the recently deceased, but the speaker is aware of it and extends the honorific.

Likewise, in #3, the speaker may be responding to a perceived slight, rather than a verbal one, or to an incident long over but still remembered. In each case, relevance is present in choice and manner of utterance (166).

Grehan writes of the prevalent historic use of holy words by the people of Damascus, and outlines how these words and phrases, all elements of the Allāh Lexicon, had long been encouraged, even beyond the mention of their use in the Qur'ān. Seen as a form of blessing or protection, Damascenes warded off evil and danger by mentioning "the name of God when closing the door of their home, extinguishing a lantern, or sealing a jug or water vessel... When people sneezed, they should say, 'Praise be to God'; companions should immediately reply, "May God have mercy on you"" (1007).

The power of the word, for good or bad, remains a constant theme in any analysis of the Arabic language. Negative use of Allāh's name or cursing in His name was deemed to have as much power as a benediction. Ibn Kannan (in Grehan) recounted multiple instances where a depreciatory oath devolved into tragic results. He recalled "an earlier episode in which a local girl had borrowed one of her mother's headcloths without permission. *Inshā' Allāh*' [Arabic translation and italics mine], the mother swore, 'I'll wrap your mouth with it!' [referring to the burial shroud]" (1007). When the daughter died of a fever shortly after, no one was surprised. The curse, spoken in a moment of maternal irritation, had done its work.

Times of exigency invariably bring out a selection of Allāh Lexicon choices and, along with them, recognition of Allāh's will in the extension of life and the inevitability of death. Farḥat Moazam, a physician himself, has examined the nature of religious belief in medical circumstances. As partners in that environment, Pakistanis treat doctors and medical care givers with great reverence, "due not only to their knowledge and scientific expertise but also to the historical position accorded the art and science of medicine in Islām" (31). Rather than avoiding mention of religion and spirituality during discussions of critical health issues, Pakistani patients expect and welcome mention of Allāh from their physician, who is thereby acknowledging that he or she is a mere instrument of

Allāh's work and that they are not, in fact, gods themselves. As for the physicians, their own attachment to Islām or respect for it makes the use of phrases from the Allāh Lexicon natural:

While transmitting news of a successfully performed surgical procedure that is expected to have a good outcome, a surgeon will invariably add *inshā' Allāh*, "if God wills." A family reporting that the patient is recovering well from an extensive medical intervention will always remember to end this news with *māshā' Allāh*, "with the grace of God," or *subhāna Allāh*, "praise be to God." (Moazam 33)

In Morocco and other Arabic-speaking countries a doctor may be recommended to a friend or acquaintance by assigning them an Allāh-given characteristic. For example, someone might say, "Yes, go and see Dr. Fulan Fulan [so and so]. He is blessed with *rahmatullāh* [the compassion of Allāh]" (Şafar).

As can be seen in its broad areas of use in letter writing, oaths and swearing, honorifics, health care, and a full spectrum of speech acts, the Allāh Lexicon is ubiquitously placed in discourse and interaction. Indeed, it is impossible to fully analyze the Arabic language without recourse to the Islāmic religion and phrases arising out of it. Ingrained in a myriad of social, conversational, legal, and business venues is this linguistic evidence of a permeation of Allāh's dominance in all phases and realms of human life. This is in direct contrast to English as shown by Morrow in this volume, where the name of God is far down the list of frequency, and just as rare are references to respected spiritual governance in daily discourse. To the Arab speaker, notes Kharrat,

English rhetoric is manifestly secular, and may display a lack of concern for divine involvement in the life of humankind. This could be a stumbling block to acculturation, which may affect language assimilation due to the dissonance between the mother tongue and the target language in matters of the religious content of speech formulae. (3)

Here, Kharrat brings up the issue of whether Arabic speakers will be able to express themselves fully in English as well as whether there is even a place in

English for the religiously reflective aspects of the Allāh Lexicon. The possibility also arises that Arabic speakers may well view native English speakers as people for whom nothing is holy and who have little respect for anything beyond themselves, much less for the sacred.

3. Specialized Language and Pragmatic Use

Flexibility of use in Arabic and awkwardness in translation are often found within the Allāh Lexicon. Phrases such as *Allāh yi'āwn* [Allāh helps], *inshā' Allāh* [If Allāh wills], may lend themselves to translation in English; yet within the context of English-speaking traditions such phrases reflect a less significant cultural component and have little extended social meaning. Consider that, in Castleton (2000), these two phrases were found to extend their use into a wide selection of circumstance. *Allāh yi'āwn* [Allāh helps], for example, is employed when the speaker desires to encourage someone, to end a meeting at the workplace with a colleague, to bid farewell, to acknowledge someone who is working hard, and even when observing someone attempting a difficult math problem. *Inshā' Allāh* [If it pleases Allāh or If Allāh wills it], as noted in the same study, covers situations dealing with the future, when promising to do something, when what will happen is unknown, when expressing hope, when outlining wishes, and when offering assurance.

With these two examples, and dozens of others, occasions for use are both varied and inherently known to the user. Even Locke, in the 17th century, recognized that a person who has been raised with a word having a certain signification will continue to apply that knowledge throughout his or her life, while someone not so informed by his or her own history is ignorant of that meaning. The vital substance of this type of language feature and its specialized pragmatic use was defined when Locke explored the idea of special language and human understanding: "Words, in their immediate signification, are the sensible signs of his ideas who uses them" (Nidditch and Rogers 223). Locke went on to declare that when people communicate with one another, their intent is to pass on both specific and implicit messages. The choice of a word or phrase cannot be separated from the life knowledge and experience of the speaker: "[w]ords being

voluntary signs, they cannot be voluntary signs imposed by him on things he knows not" (223).

These assertions ally the historic views of John Locke with the work of Grzybek and others who insist that linguistic units such as proverbs and adages, while following the rules of language, must nevertheless be analyzed in terms of *language in use*. Even Saussure acknowledges this when he states, "Language has an individual aspect and a social aspect. One is not conceivable without the other" (9). He cautioned that it might look "very easy to distinguish between the system and its history...the connexion is so close that it is hard to separate them" (9). The social features of Arabic stipulate that meaning can only be realized through actual use and in Castleton (2000) and Morrow (this volume) the extensive and diverse actual use of the Allāh Lexicon illustrates that for Arabic speakers these items have a powerful significance. Nevertheless, it must be also said that linguists might not be totally convinced of the impact or importance of Allāh Lexicon phrases within the greater body of the Arabic language. Dr. Kent Bach, a professor at San Francisco State University, responded to a query about how the omnipresence of *inshā' Allāh* fit into his speech act theory by questioning whether it wasn't "just a ritualistic interjection, with no communicative import, that is appropriate for any statement about what one is going to do?"

While to the non-native Arabic speaker or the Christian Arabic speaker *inshā' Allāh* might seem more formulaic than functional, the fact is that *inshā' Allāh* and other elements of the Allāh Lexicon, all so indelibly embedded in Muslim culture as to sustain fourteen centuries of constant use, should not be dismissed as merely "ritualistic." Virtues of requirement, longevity, diversity, and eminence with regard to future events, such as are displayed in the use of *inshā' Allāh*, acknowledge a firmer, more valuable, connection, even though it is not one necessarily reflected in the dominant religions or cultures of English-speaking countries like the United States. Here again, we are faced with trying to blend two languages which, though they are similar in that they are languages, and though they may have a selection of words which transfer accurately in both vocabulary and pragmatic arenas, nevertheless contain essential elements that cannot possibly

bridge the cultural and historic differences. Wierzbicka considers this dilemma when she cites the work of Haumi Befu who posited that, “no matter how one might rephrase the statement, one cannot eliminate the uniqueness of the meaning inherent in each language” (131). It is possible that within this distinctive Arabic language feature, the Allāh Lexicon, there exists a previously uncategorized speech act, one best titled “reverence.” Or perhaps, through this body of phrases, scholars will identify a category that would not translate into English at all, either in lexical form or philosophical understanding.

Borrowing from Wierzbicka, who argues that English speakers assume a level of linguistic supremacy when they assert that everything that happens in another language can be codified through the use of English terminology, it may be that the Allāh Lexicon does not fall into any currently defined or even credibly defined category. Says Wierzbicka: “the conviction that one can understand human cognition, and human psychology in general, on the basis of English alone seems short sighted, if not downright ethnocentric” (8).

4. Identity and Retention of Ethnicity

There is a saying in Arabic: “If you do not have a past, you will not have a future” [*lā mustaqbal liman lā māḍia lahu*] (Şafar). In describing how an ethnic group experiences their own identity, Haarmann explains that those individuals still living at the center of their traditional ethnic world may not be as aware of what constitutes their ethnicity as those who have stepped away from what is familiar and so become very aware of what is missing from the life they now experience (61). Arabs living in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and North Africa, for example, experience a past and an historic identity blended seamlessly with the present as they pass within view of the same landmarks, markets, mosques, and homes on a daily basis. This group lives and breathes their heritage and ethnicity, whereas Arab-Americans and Arab nationals living in the U.S. must search either more deeply within themselves or further afield to touch base with their ethnic core. For Arabs living in the United States, their past may lay in a homeland, culture, native language and community far away in fact and/or in memory. This is certainly true for Arab-Americans whose families have been in

the U.S. for some time, and who may or may not speak Arabic. In a different manner, it may also be true of new immigrants, those who have chosen to come to the United States for reasons of their own. Within this group, individuals will be found for whom American culture may not have the scope with which they are able to adequately express their feelings, attitudes, or values.

Using Joseph Conrad as a prime example, Edward Sa'īd wrote about the paradox of international wanderers, people who, for critical reasons of their own, choose to leave the safe and familiar hearth of their own culture and immerse themselves in another, only to discover that a part of their ever-flexible soul remains bereft: "[t]he first thing to acknowledge is the loss of home and language in the new setting, a loss that Conrad has the severity to portray as irredeemable, relentlessly anguished, raw, untreatable, always acute" (1). Like Conrad, Sa'īd was an 'Other' in a variety of worlds where everyone else belonged, and being so, he gave considerable attention to the manifest aspects of his multiple identities. His own first experiences on American soil reveal this reality when as a school boy, he was immediately identified as one "from an inferior, or somehow disapproved race" (1). Tellingly, he describes how, when introducing himself then to a fellow Arab and beginning to speak that language, he was firmly instructed, "No, brother, no Arabic here. I left all that behind when I came to America" (5).

When attempting to codify Arab identity, it would be a mistake to assume that, despite Sa'īd's moving experience, all Arabs everywhere identify themselves as one. Indeed, until relatively recent history, Arabs were not identified as a group at all.⁹ Foreign politicians and canny handling of various tribes during the battle for desert lands from Istanbul to Yemen in World War I changed all that, giving rise to the concept of Arab nationalism. That nationalism has faced difficult-to-scale barriers in the face of dissimilar needs, diverse interests, and single-minded goals (Suleimān 1994: 6) "[y]et the dilemma of reconciling plurality and unity constitutes an integral part of the Arab identity" (Barakāt).

As mentioned earlier, one of the ways this is handled is by using Arabic as the common element, since language can transcend politics, self-interest, economies, and borders. Historically modeled by nation groups such as the

French and the Greeks, we continue to observe this tendency to assign an ethnic identity to a linguistically connected group, and even to build nationhood on a designated dialect (Haarmann 64). Fishman contends that “Even the *name* of the beloved language can be viewed as an active causal force” (46). His study demonstrates how the language itself is seen as a gift of inheritance, the route to preservation of heritage, the circuit by which thousands of years of history are rendered immediate and an invaluable legacy from the past that can be left to the future.

Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper explored the ongoing debate regarding the universality and interchangeability of speech acts from one language to another. While mentioning opposing viewpoints, they caution that “if claims to pragmatic universality are to approximate any type of validity, they should be based on the empirical investigation of many more [languages]” (8). Wierzbicka concurs and cautions against giving too much credence to researchers who reject any connection between language and thought processes, particularly if that researcher “never looks at any languages other than English” to support his or her claims (6).

5. The Arab Experience in America

In the 2000 census, there were over 614,000 Arabic L1 speakers living in the United States, and 600,000 more who consider themselves Arab but may not speak the language (U.S. Bureau of Census 2000). For many of these people, their language, ethnicity and traditional culture is a matter of pride and, occasionally, burden. Those of Arab ancestry who are currently living in the United States may face problems stemming from negative stereotyping, overt racism, and discrimination, as well as systematic misinformation about their heritage and religion. Muslim Arabs, especially, deal with frequent obstacles to comfort and inclusion in this national culture (Jackson 1995). So distant, different, and dubious do those of Arab ancestry appear to many Americans, that during the Gulf War in 1991, our own daughter, who is half-Kuwaiti and very close to her father’s side of the family, was subjected not only to the usual “camel jockey” and “rag head” comments from classmates, but also to insensitive remarks such as “Does

everyone in your family drive Mercedes Benzes?” from her teachers.¹⁰ In addition, terrified on behalf of her extended Kuwaiti family, she heard from her own congressman, Peter DeFazio, that it was not worth the life of a single American to halt the invasion by Iraq and restore autonomy to Kuwait and its people.

Currently, statistics demonstrate an increase in hate crimes, plus ethnic and religious bias against Arabs and Muslims since 9/11/2001 (CAIR 2005), and even the fact of looking Muslim, having an Arab-sounding name, speaking Arabic, writing Arabic, or using phrases from the Allāh Lexicon has created suspicion and difficulties for the native Arabic speakers involved as well as an atmosphere of suspicion and bias with regard to the Arabic language:¹¹

1. In July 1996, the American government and a herd of media were quick to determine and accuse an anonymous Arab bomber of causing the explosion and crash of TWA flight 880. The crash proved to be caused by faulty wiring (Ibish).
2. In October, 1999, a relief pilot on EgyptAir Flight 990 was suspected of voicing suicidal intentions when he said *Tawakkaltu 'alā Allāh*, or “I put my faith in God” shortly before the airline crashed into the Atlantic. (*U.S News and World Report*, 11/19/99, C1)
3. After the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, the *New York Times* insinuated a connection between that event and the presence of three mosques in the city. (Ibish)
4. Saousan Kiwan, a young Syrian woman, received criticism from her instructor at a Michigan community college when she preceded a classroom presentation with the words, *Bismillāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (In the name of Allāh, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful). (Cohen C1)
5. In Chicago, police officers who are also Muslim have filed suit for religious discrimination, citing being called “rock thrower,” “terrorist”, and “Ṭalibān” by other officers and even their superiors. (Yates 11)
6. Officials at San José State University found multiple threats to shoot and kill Muslims in campus bathrooms. (Scelfo 6)
7. “The FBI’s annual hate crimes report found that incidents targeting people, institutions and businesses identified with the Islāmic faith increased from 28 in 2000 to 481 in 2001.” (2002)

8. In a suit filed in Florida, a young Muslim woman complained that she was not allowed to begin a job for which she had been hired because she was wearing a scarf. (Court documents 2004)

9. Midwest Airlines cancelled a flight to San Francisco “after a passenger found Arabic handwriting in an in-flight magazine.” (Jones)

10. In the liberal bastion that is Berkeley, California, several young Muslim women were spat upon and called racial epithets by a group of young men. (Shibata)

11. “The Koran needs to be flushed” proclaimed a sign posted in front of Danielstown Baptist Church. (Humphries)

12. In the first year following 9/11, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee documented hundreds of acts of illegal removal from planes, vandalism, battery, property damages, physical assault, and harassment of Arabs, Arab-Americans, Muslims, and those thought to be Muslims. (ADC 2003)

6. Methods and Materials

6.1 Research Questions

Having established that the Allāh Lexicon consists of what Wierzbicka calls “key words” (1997) and that Arabic qualifies as a “holy language” (Fishman 1996), the issue arose of how these essential phrases transfer when native Arabic speakers switch to English. Given the requirement to use these phrases is dictated by the Qur’ān, the core of the Islāmic religion itself, is it possible for the imbedded nature of pragmatic meaning to bridge the vastness between languages? The research questions that drove this study included the following:

1. Where does the *inshā’ Allāh* go?
2. How do Arabic speakers accommodate the pragmatics and functions of the Allāh Lexicon when they speak English?
3. Are they constrained in any way from doing so based on a systemic bias against Islām and Arabic in the English-speaking world?
4. To what degree are these L2 English speakers comfortable using the Allāh Lexicon?
5. In what manner does locational use of English impact native Arabic speakers’ use of the Allāh Lexicon?

6. Do native Arabic speakers perceive an erosion of their religious commitment if they are not using the words and phrases prescribed in that religion in daily speech?

6.2 Survey

Participants in this study responded to 135 separate inquiries in a survey entitled “Language Survey: Arabic and Culture.” This survey was divided into five sections. Sections I, II, and III were described in chapter 2 regarding the frequency of use of selected Allāh Lexicon phrases. Section IV (Table 16) addresses the issue of transfer of the Allāh Lexicon across language boundaries. In addition, it asks for specific information about ten phrases which the respondent has already identified as essential in their personal discourse from Section III. Section IV clarifies whether or not the most essential and frequently used phrases from Section III were then used in either their Arabic form when the speaker is speaking English, or translated into English when speaking English. To deal with a fuller variety of methods in which the Allāh Lexicon may be expressed, respondents were also offered the option of acknowledging silent or whispered use of the phrases when they were speaking English. Finally, we were concerned with whether these silent or whispered expressions were translated into English or whether they retained their Arabic form. In both of these sections, a blank space or non-response was simply counted as a 0 or naught.

Table 16: Description Transfer of Use when Speaking English
(Survey Section IV)

Expression (List only the # of the phrase from either Section III or the longer list on pgs. 1 and 2)	Do you use this phrase (in Arabic) when speaking English?		Do you use this phrase by translating it into English when speaking English?		Do you say this phrase silently or in a whisper when speaking English?	How do you express this phrase in English? How do you translate it?
1.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
2.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
3.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
4.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
5.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
6.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
7.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
8.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
9.	Yes	No	Yes	No		
10.	Yes	No	Yes	No		

Section V of the initial survey listed 33 specific statements related to feelings, comfort, and personal experience. The participants were to respond numerically in the following order: 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = not sure, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree. When respondents chose to leave an item on the survey blank, a zero was assigned to that item. All other responses had numeric designations. When making comparisons or determining arithmetic means, zeros were not considered

The statements requiring a response based on opinion, feelings, and personal experience fell into general categories, such as: 1) attitudes about Arabic, 2) religion, 3) future plans, 4) bicultural-bilingual experience, and 5) bias. The categories were chosen in such a way that survey items would address between one and three of these specific issues with the majority of items only addressing one or two categories. In general, there were as few as three survey items per attitude category or as many as 12 items per attitude category. The comfort, the language attitude, and bias categories have the greatest number of statements (approximately 11 items per category) attached to them, while the media and Islāmic religion categories had the fewest (three and four items, respectively). The statements used are detailed as follows:

Table 17

Section V: Survey Statements

1. Arabic should be considered a world class language.
2. Arabic is an important religious language
3. Children of Arabic ancestry should learn Arabic.
4. I consider myself to be religious.
5. Even if I live many years in an English-speaking country, my children will speak Arabic well.
6. You can be a good Muslim if you don't read the Qur'ān in Arabic.
7. I feel more at home with myself when I speak Arabic
8. I still retain my cultural identity when I speak English.
9. I feel I have to learn English to accomplish my future goals.
10. I feel less like an Arab when I speak English.
11. Americans have a very biased view of Arabs.
12. I can better express my personal feelings in Arabic.
13. I can express all my deepest feelings quite well in English.
14. If possible, in the future, I would prefer to live and work in an Arabic-speaking country.
15. I miss speaking Arabic when I'm unable to use it for a while.
16. I believe that Americans should learn more about Arabs and Arabic.
17. I feel uncomfortable using Arabic phrases when I speak English with native speakers of that language.
18. The Americans I've met have a realistic view of Arabs.
19. The Americans I've met think that Arabic is an interesting language.
20. I feel comfortable using words like *alḥamdulillāh* or *inshā' Allāh* when speaking in English with friends, professors, and colleagues.
21. I feel that it is my responsibility to educate Americans and other non-Arab nations about my culture, religion and language.
22. I feel embarrassed or shy about using Arabic phrases like *alḥamdulillāh* or *inshā' Allāh* with Americans.
23. I am reluctant to talk about my culture with Christians.
24. I feel that my religion is totally accepted by my non-Muslim neighbors.
25. I feel free to express my religion and culture in my everyday speech, even if it means using Arabic.
26. The American media has a clear understanding of Arab culture.
27. The American media often demonstrates bias against Arabs
28. I feel confident that I will receive the same treatment by the American police whether they know I am an Arab or not.
29. I was upset about the furor about the Arabic phrase spoken by the pilot on EgyptAir Flight 990.
30. Americans never treat me personally with suspicion.
31. I usually get along well with Arabs from other countries.
32. I enjoy the fact that Arabic speakers have interesting dialects.
33. If I hear someone speaking Arabic in a supermarket or in public, I am likely to approach them and begin a conversation.

In addition, following the 33 statements above, five other queries were present. These focused on the Arabic language, English use and opinion and required an extended response.

34. I consider my level of English competence to be: native-like, functional or less than adequate.
35. What I would most like people to know about the Arabic language and culture is:
36. In your experience, what is the Arabic language better able to do than English?
37. In your experience, what is the English language better able to do than Arabic?
38. What were your most notable experiences while adjusting to this culture?

Survey Categories

In order to cover as much territory as possible within the scope of the survey, statements were included to elicit information on a wide range of personal attitudes. Specific attitudinal survey items fell into the following categories by the survey statement item numbers. Please note that there are items which appear in more than one category by virtue of their multiple *foci*.

Table 18: Classification of Survey Items into Attitudinal Categories

ATTITUDINAL CATEGORIES	ITEMS
Attitudes about Arabic	1, 2, 3, 5, 7,10,12,15,19, 33
Religion	2, 4, 6, 23, 24, 25
Future Plans	5, 9,14
Bilingual-Bicultural Experiences	8, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 33
Bias	11, 16, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

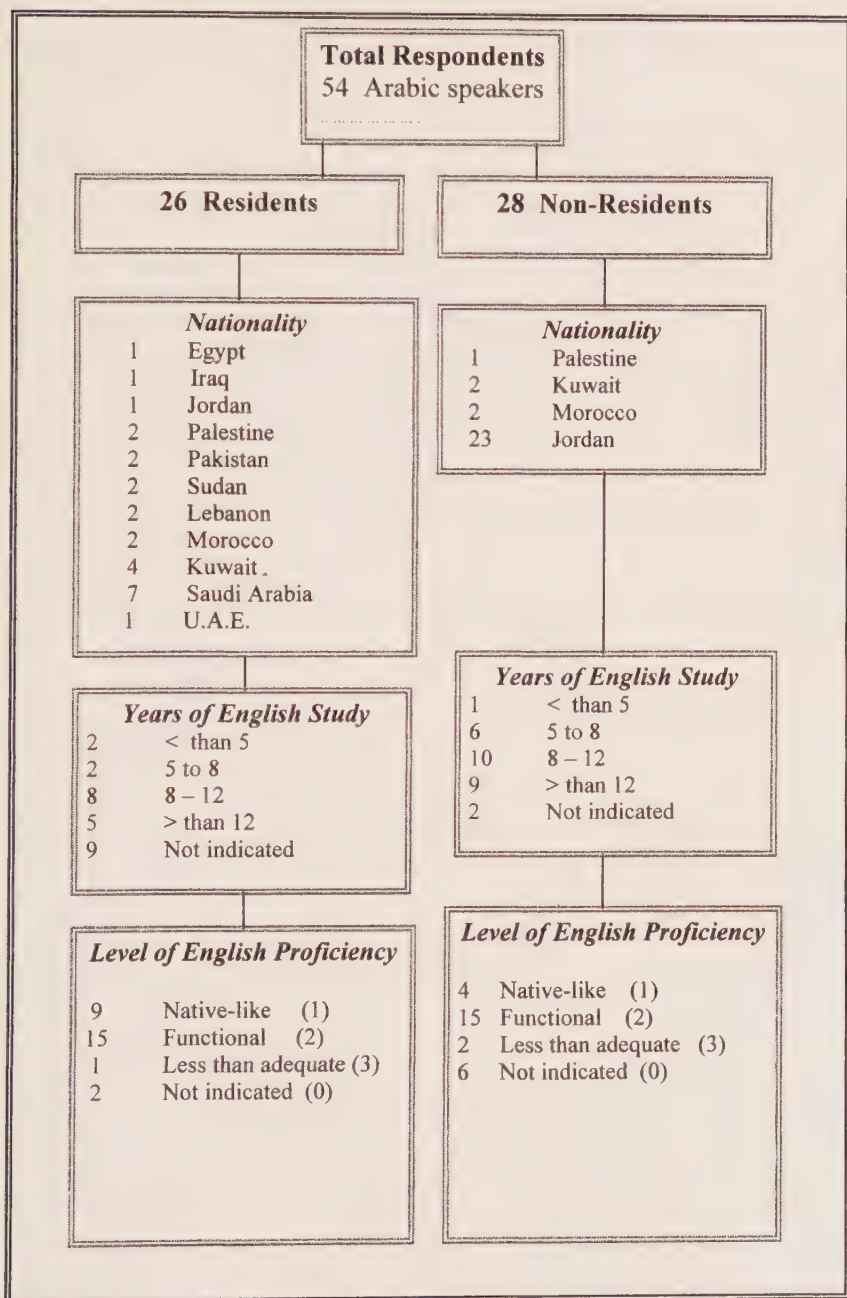
7. Participants

For this study, 54 participants were enlisted who were at least partially bilingual (Arabic and English), with half living in the United States at the time of this study and half living in the Arabic-speaking world. The participants were native to 11 different countries, 10 of them having Arabic as an official language, and one, Pakistan, using Arabic for business and religious purposes (Table 19). Within the demographic portion of the survey, informants were asked to indicate their number of years of English study and the level of English proficiency they felt they had achieved, whether in school or outside education. The acquisition of sufficient English to understand the survey and a moderate to high level of pragmatic competence in English were the two primary reasons for requesting this information.

As indicated, the residential group came from a broader range of Arabic-speaking countries than the non-residents, with participants from 11 countries versus four for the non-resident group. It is noteworthy that a greater number of the resident group chose not to indicate their number of years of English study,

possibly due to confusion about whether the time they have been in the United States should be considered an “English study” period. The omission of that figure grants the non-residents the appearance of greater years of English study. Despite this, and not surprisingly, the non-resident group did not report as many native-like speakers, only four out of 28, versus 9 out of 26 for the resident group. Since many participants reported English as only one of the foreign languages they had studied, the levels of proficiency may also be impacted by a transfer of linguistic competence between languages as well as years of study. Of further interest is the lack of equivalence between the number of years of English study and the self-reported level of language fluency.

Table 19: Demographic Information for all Respondents



8. Results for Transfer Survey

“Where does the *inshā’ Allāh* go when Arabic L1 speakers use English?” That query was the original impetus for this entire study. In order to answer the original question, the Allāh Lexicon must be considered in terms of its transferability and adaptability within an English-only environment, incidents of code-switching and the possibility of code-repression. For this study, two different types of bilingual speech populations were observed. Most germane in terms of geographical relationship to cultural and key word transfer was the United States of America, where half of the survey respondents were living at the time of the survey. The respondents living in the United States had not only English-speaking pragmatics to deal with, but the complex process of socialization and acclimatization as well. Entry into a new country or cultural environment is epitomized by an inevitable tug of war between the always present, though often unconscious, desire to remain “true to oneself” and becoming a viable member of the new community. Padilla explains that this struggle within self and ethnicity is only realized as a “direct function of inter-group contact and opposition and [is] not necessarily an important part of all aspects of daily life” (188). In other words, immigrants might well not be aware of what aspects of their heritage, personae, inherited culture and language would cause unease or discomfort in the new culture. Nor would they be consistently conscious of where and when in the process they were forgoing traditional communicative practices in favor of those which were prevalent in their new environment. In order to balance the research, the study also observed transferability of phrases from the Allāh Lexicon in English-speaking situations within primarily Arabic-speaking environments. These domains included the Institute of Justice in ‘Ammān, Jordan, international oil companies in Kuwait, the U.S. Peace Corps office in Rabat, Morocco, and other similar venues.

In answer to the primary research question “Where does the *inshā’ Allāh* go?” one Moroccan informant indicated that there isn’t a place for it [*inshā’ Allāh*] in English and that gradually the phrase faded from use. In fact, when later

this informant heard *inshā' Allāh* spoken by someone else, it sounded foreign. Another recent arrival to the U.S. admitted to merely thinking *inshā' Allāh* rather than using it aloud. One, accidental *inshā' Allāh*, uttered on the job, drew a firm response from a co-worker. "You'll have to speak English," she said, "because I don't understand anything else" (Castleton 2000:24). This supports the comments of Padilla, who noted that "people make very negative attributions about immigrants who use their native language in public; the commonly held belief is that these speakers refuse to assimilate" (114). What would be a standard socialization agent, a means to create community and respond to like histories in an Arabic-speaking environment, mutates instead into a cause for separation and perceived difference.¹² A recent immigrant to the United States focused on one phrase and recalled, "I used to always say *Allāhu Akbar* before I ate anything. I realized that I've stopped, and I wonder why" (al-Kabouss).¹³ When Rebecca LaSor, an Ohio University graduate school colleague, informally queried three of her native Arabic-speaking elementary students at East Elementary School in Athens, Ohio, about their use of Allāh phrases, particularly *inshā' Allāh*, their response was much the same. "Oh, no," said one, "I don't say it. Nobody will understand. Sometimes I just whisper it to myself" (Castleton 2000: 25). Again, Padilla addressed this reality, saying, "[f]eedback consists of rewards and punishments that indicate the appropriateness of various behavioral alternatives" (115). Blank stares, faces turned away, crinkled brows, and mutterings are just a few of the punishments we observed when non-native English speakers use another language in public. In airports particularly, we have recently made it a practice to remain in English and not slide into Arabic or use Arabic words and phrases even when we cannot be heard by others.¹⁴

The comments above will be seen to be corroborated in responses to Section III (see chapter 2) of the "Language and Culture Survey" wherein Arabic L1 speakers living in the U.S. and abroad were asked to note the ten phrases from the Allāh Lexicon which they consider essential to everyday discourse. As a subset of that determination in "Section IV," they were asked to note which of these essential phrases, if any, they used when speaking English. Of these, they

were asked which of them they used in the original Arabic, which of them they translated into English when speaking English, and whether any of the phrases were spoken silently or whispered when speaking English rather than voiced prominently.

The results of this portion of the study support the comments of Bernstein (1996), Wierzbicka (1997), Wardhaugh (1989), El-Sayed (1990) and others with regard to the improbability of word and phrase transferability to another language environment when there are complex cultural pragmatics at work in the original language. The current political and media climate in the United States may be a discouraging factor in the choice to use or not use items from the Allāh Lexicon, yet the survey explored whether this lexicon, like an umbrella of traditional culture over an individual's language use and religious faith, would be sustained or simply fold up in the face of so unsympathetic a culture as currently exists in the United States. The anecdotes above regarding use of the Allāh Lexicon in the U.S. demonstrate both unnerving responses to use by U.S. citizens and also an apparent recognition on the part of native Arabic speakers that *Allāhu Akbar* and *alḥamdulillāh* might not be linguistically fitting or welcome in a predominantly English-speaking environment, regardless of their comforting religious overtones.

Native Arabic speakers reported a wide variety of essential phrases, depending on their native country and vernacular. Yet, of the 32 phrases given in Section II (see chapter 2), each one was listed as an essential phrase by at least one of the respondents. Nevertheless, there were a great number of shared essential phrases among the participant pool. Eight phrases were on the top 10 list for 20 or more informants, their dominance accounted for by the variety and likelihood of venues in which the phrase is an appropriate or indispensable response. Table 20 gives these phrases in order of popularity among all participants.

Table 20: Most Frequently Chosen Essential Phrases for all Informants

Phrase #	# of Responses	Translation of phrase	Reported occasions for use of phrase
2	46	Praise be to Allāh	After eating, after a difficult job, after a slight accident, when thanking Allāh, during bad time, when needing relief from a stressful situation, hoping everything is okay, during greetings with someone
1	44	In the name of Allāh	When thanking Allāh, in bad times, before doing things, during prayers, before eating a meal, getting into a car, starting something, when slaughtering a sheep, before going to sleep, seeing something for the first time
4	41	If Allāh wills it	Talking about the future, promising to do something, Allāh only knows what will happen, regarding hopes, dreams, wishes, and unknown situations.
3	36	There is no god but Allāh	After a death, with very bad news, during prayers, in a tough situation, when I feel I cannot do a thing or change what I have, when I'm astonished
5	31	By Allāh (Really?)	Confirming reality, needing to confirm something, as an exclamation, swearing something is true, making people believe you
13	26	Allāh knows	Said to doubters, to mean that Allāh will reward you, in response to a question you can't answer, suspicion of someone, instead of "I don't know"
25	21	May Allāh bless you	To bless someone after a good job, for people who are junior to you, when thanking someone, to someone who gives something, when we appreciate someone's actions or behavior
31	32	Glory be to Allāh	In situations of admiration, when surprised, when impatient, when astonished by the beauty of something, if we do not know how something happens, when I see or hear anything wonderful

In terms of perceived necessity, the non-residents disclosed around 20% more essential phrases from the Allāh Lexicon than the resident group (Table 21), which may be explained by the non-residents' immediate proximity to the originating culture and language. Overall, the non-residents reported 265 essential phrases, compared to the residents' 210. Another notable aspect within Table 21 is the disparity between the number of phrases the informants deemed *essential* and the number of phrases which they subsequently use when having discourse in English. Either by virtue of linguistic dissonance or code-repression, residents' usage of essential phrases dropped from 210 in the first case to 156 in the second, for a total loss of 26%. In contrast, those respondents living overseas had only a 12% variance between their perception of essentialness and use of the phrase when speaking English, showing the presence of 232 phrases when speaking English out of their 265 total.

Code-switching, the act of using a morpheme from one language when actually conversing in another is also addressed in this study. An example of code-switching, such as "I am going to visit *mi madre* tomorrow," reveals a segue from the initial discourse language, in this case English, to Spanish when the switched word or phrase comes more automatically. In terms of this study, code-switching would involve using an Allāh Lexicon phrase, like *inshā' Allāh* [If Allāh wills it] while speaking English. This would be in contrast to translating *inshā' Allāh* into English.

When the use of words and phrases from the native language occur in the course of a conversation in a *lingua franca* such as English, Polzl avers that there is a desire on the part of the speaker to signal membership in one group or another and to honor their L1 at the same time. She found that native Arabic speakers in Jordan, when using English as their *lingua franca* with others from different native languages, regularly inserted religiously based phrases in English, and often then followed with the original Arabic (15).¹⁵ This type of behavior may account for the number of essential phrases (124) non-residents translate into English versus those of the residents who translate just 60. While English itself is a flexible and vital interactive tool, with a multiplicity of borrowed words adding

spice to its Indo-European foundation, the environment of the United States may not offer the safe space of other locations where English *lingua franca* is used, within which bilingual speakers can reveal their cultural identity through the use of L1 phrases or key words (Polzl 20-21). Diminished willingness to take linguistic risks in a culture whose pragmatics do not promote such expression may also be a factor in the responses the residents gave to the “# of phrases translated to English when speaking English” category in Table 21.

Table 21:

Transfer of Essential Phrases to English- Speaking Environments among Residents and Non-Residents

Group	# of identified essential phrases	# of essential phrases used when speaking English	# of phrases used in Arabic when speaking English	# of phrases translated to English when speaking English	# of phrases spoken silently when speaking English	# of phrases whispered when speaking English
Residents	210	156	78	60	34	46
Non-Residents	265	232	91	124	18	94

Importantly, this result was mimicked for the two groups when contrasting responses to the attitude item #20 in Section V of the survey, which stated, “I feel comfortable using words like *alḥamdulillāh* or *inshā’ Allāh* when speaking English with friends, professors, and colleagues.” Residents in this case showed only a 42% agreement with the statement at the *strongly agree* and *agree* levels. In contrast, the non-residents demonstrated a much higher level of comfort, responding with 74% agreement to the statement at the *strongly agree* and *agree* levels. The difference in situation between the residents and the non-residents cannot be stressed sufficiently. Not only are the dominant language and culture reversed in the two environments, but there are sociological and psychological pressures on the residents that do not exist for the non-residents. Bialystok and Hakuta (1994) cite the work of Green (1986) when they discuss how bilingual

speakers make linguistic choices for language use when in conversation and then detail how “mental processes can be both activated and inhibited...What is necessary is some kind of neurological switch, which Green calls the specifier, that has the responsibility of selecting which language is to be used...an inhibition message [is sent] to the language output center that is to remain mute...Code-switching occurs when there is no inhibiting message” (116).

In an Arabic-speaking environment such as that experienced by the respondents living in Jordan, Kuwait, or Morocco, there are fewer societal inhibitions to the use of Arabic expressions when speaking English than there would be in the United States, where the use of Arabic faces far more scrutiny and Arabs, as a class, continue to be defined by the actions of a miniscule number of the total. Indeed, Shermatova describes how the western media portrays Islām itself as “an unfathomable menace of medieval cruelty” (7B). This image has unfortunately enveloped Arabic as the language of Islām as well as the religion, preventing, in many cases, the existence of what Meierkord identifies as a “linguistic masala,” a *mélange* of language and lexical choices that reflect a person’s heritage as well as their current situation (109).

Non-residents are twice as likely to translate or attempt to translate, a phrase from the Allāh Lexicon into English when they are speaking that language. The results from the non-resident group are significant in that they are speaking English in an environment in which Arabic is revered and respected, not simply for its linguistic components, but also for its history and attachment to religion. By using Allāh Lexicon phrases in Arabic while speaking English, they are demonstrating code-switching as well as an aspect of what Polzl describes as language loyalty. Polzl’s work in the area of use of an L1, native language, or an Ln, a language being learned, cites both Hullen (1992), who described emotional loyalty, and Rampton (1995), who posited the concept of inheritance or allegiance to the language inherited (2003). Language loyalty in the results of this survey arises when the speaker uses essential phrases in Arabic when otherwise speaking English; thereby the speaker, “can opt to introduce their conventions to a ‘wider’ audience and at the same time adhere to their L1 norms” (Polzl 17).

What is striking to note in Polzl's research and in our own experience is that when a native speaker of one language reverts to it for key words while in discourse in a *lingua franca* such as English, the non-native speakers of that language [Arabic] with whom he interacts may begin to use that same vocabulary in Arabic when they are in conversation with him. In the same manner, people who have visited Hawaii often begin to say *Aloha* during their visit and subsequently come away with a propensity for using *Aloha* as both greeting and a good bye. In Polzl's study, a group of students, only one of whom is a native Arabic speaker, nevertheless exchange greetings in Arabic once the Arabic speaker has initiated the process. The non-native Arabic speakers have all studied Arabic for one semester or more. In this example, the reader will observe how the non-Arabic speakers honor the Arabic speaker's loyalty to that language in their responses:

- Ramses: <Native-Arabic> *al-salāmu 'alaykum* <Arabic> (Peace be upon you). <entering the apartment>
 Attila: <Native-Turkish> *wa 'alaykum al-salām* <Arabic> (And upon you, peace).
 Sisi: <Native-Austrian> *wa 'alaykum al-salām* <Arabic> (And upon you, peace).
 Berta: <Native-Austrian> *marḥaban* <Arabic> (Welcome). (Polzl 16)

Conversely, by translating essential phrases into English, the native Arabic speaker is honoring the cultural norms of their original environment while participating in *lingua franca* discourse, in this case in English. The use of Allāh Lexicon phrases translated into English when speaking English may also be a means of the speaker asserting himself or herself as a pious person, even within the frame of a language which may not mirror those sentiments widely. Muslim women in New York are liable to do just the reverse. D'Agostino reveals that in the cosmopolitan and diverse environs of New York City, young Muslim women, in particular, use phrases from the Allāh Lexicon, as well as other religious phrases, as a signal to the listener of their personal piety. They do this to both affirm their religion and as a form of focus on and practice with a faith they want

to be a positive reflection of, yet tellingly, this speech occurs primarily in the company of other Muslims rather than the general populace (290).

9. Attitude Survey

Table 22: Scores for Responses Regarding Attitudes for *Language and Culture Survey* for 54 Respondents

Item number	Key words of statements	Category Codes *	Average	Statistical Significance #
1	Arabic s/b considered world class	AA	4.46	ab
2	Arabic is an important religious language	AA, R	4.78	a
3	Children should learn Arabic	AA	4.56	a
4	I consider myself to be religious	R	3.89	abcd
5	My children will speak Arabic	AA	4.31	ab
6	You can be a good Muslim w/o reading Qur'ān in Arabic.	R	3.43	cdef
7	I feel more at home if I speak Arabic	AA	3.81	bcd
8	I retain identity when I speak English	BB	4.22	abc
9	I have to learn English for my goals	FP	4.26	abc
10	I feel less Arab when I speak English	AA	2.07	g
11	Americans have biased view	B,	3.31	cdef
12	I can express feelings in Arabic	AA	3.91	abc
13	I can express feelings in English	BB	3.26	cdef
14	Want to live in Arabic-speaking country	FP	3.35	cdef
15	I miss Arabic if unable to use it	AA	3.13	defg
16	Americans should learn more	B, BB	4.3	ab
17	I feel uncomfortable using Arabic phrases when I speak English	BB, B	3.06	defg
18	Americans have realistic view	B, BB	2.98	efg
19	Americans think Arabic interesting	BB	3.15	def
20	I feel comfortable using AL in Eng.	BB	3.5	bcd
21	It is my responsibility to educate	BB	3.59	bcd
22	I feel embarrassed about using A.L	BB, B	1.98	g
23	I am reluctant to talk about my culture with Christians	R	2.11	g
24	I feel my religion is totally accepted by my non-Muslim neighbors	R	2.93	efg
25	I feel free to express my religion in everyday speech	R	3.33	cdef
26	American media understands Arab culture	B	1.85	g
27	American media demonstrates bias	B	2.78	efg
28	I will receive same treatment from Amer. police	B	2.59	fg
29	I was upset about the furor re: phrase on flight 990	B	2.83	efg
30	Americans never treat me with suspicion	B	2.74	efg
31	I get along with Arabs from other countries	O	3.02	defg
32	I enjoy the fact that Arabs have different dialects	O	2.72	efg
33	If I hear someone speaking Arabic, I will start conversation	AA	2.44	fg

Category codes are: AA = Attitude about Arabic; R = Religion; BB = Bilingual/Bicultural Experience; B = Bias; O = Other. Statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) between the means was determined by a Duncan's multiple range test following an analysis of variance using log transformed data. Means followed by a different letter are statistically significantly different ($p < 0.05$).

When drawing conclusions about the results in Table 22, remember that the items that are *a*'s, responses that people feel the most positive about, are most distant from the *g*'s, which people feel most negatively about. These two poles should be considered in terms of their distinct variations. In other words, an *a* bears no relation to a *g*. However, there is a definite relationship between overlapping sections, such as *ab* and *fg*. In addition, there is a generous amount of overlap in the middle sections. Nevertheless, anything that is *a* and *b* will never overlap with *e*, *f*, and *g*. With Duncan's Multiple Range Test, unless things stand wildly separate, you will not find that they are in a group all by themselves. For example, item #1, "Arabic should be considered a world class language," resulted in an average response of 4.46, a significant overlap between the *strongly agree* and *agree* levels. More definitive was the 4.78 response for item #2, "Arabic is an important religious language." On the percentage scale, 81% of residents responded at the *strongly agree* level while the non-residents were even more certain at 89% for *strongly agree*.

In formulating this survey, the issues raised were approached in a variety of ways in hopes of gaining greater legitimacy than by offering one-directional or solitary leading statements. It should be stated that the results differed from our initial hypothesis, which was that native Arabic speakers experience an intense sense of disconnect from their culture and language when speaking English, particularly through the loss of the Allāh Lexicon or religion affirming vocabulary. Additionally, we expected that they would have encountered a mid-to-high level resistance to their culture and language from U.S. society and the media. This second prospect came closer to our original expectation. In reviewing the results from the areas covered by the statement portion of the survey, Section V, items will be discussed according to attitudinal categories: Attitudes about Arabic, Religion, Future Plans, Bilingual-Bicultural Experiences, and Bias.

The first of these areas is Attitudes about Arabic, which included statements 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 15, and 33 (Table 23 and 24). Decisive results and strong contrasts between the non-resident and resident groups are indicated for statements 1, 2, 3, 5, and 12 in this category. As a whole, the respondents see their

language as worthy of respect, profoundly connected to religion, and as something that their children should learn and speak as a matter of course. In addition, #12 is concerned with whether they can express their feelings well in Arabic. Regarding another two statements, for children's learning Arabic (#3) and then speaking Arabic (#5), both groups spoke in unison with only slight variations. The clear showing of 4+ (Table 22) requires no further differentiation.

Slight variants occurred when the two groups were separated and the results for the same statements, #3 and #5, were looked at in isolation. In declaring their opinion about whether "Children of Arab ancestry should learn Arabic" the residents showed an 85% positive response at the *strongly agree* and *agree* levels, a moderately lower finding from the even more commanding 97% from the non-residents at the same levels. More disparate are the groups' results for the statement, "Even if I live many years in an English-speaking country, my children will speak Arabic well." The residents registered 77% at the *strongly agree* and *agree* levels, while the non-residents were more definite at about 95%. Inevitably, those who are separated from their original culture and the source of their first language become more aware of how difficult it is to advance language studies far away from the communities in which the language is spoken. Therefore, the differences in the reactions of the groups to these statements may reflect, on the part of the residents, a transition in identity over time or the accommodation of a realistic view based on their current circumstances. This would not be an *ipso facto* construct however, because, as Wurgaft stipulates, "concepts like identity have been linked to a discursive strategy in western thought that has sought to impose a sense of order and coherence on a subjective experience riddled by the contradictions and displacements inherent in language and desire" (71-72). Yet, the experiential variations between home-country and out-of-country speakers cannot be ignored, despite the lack of specificity. For example, non-residents' response to # 10, "I feel less like an Arab when I speak English" was a definitive 80% at the *strongly disagree* and *disagree* levels, while the residents, having jumped into the American dream, were less certain that their identity was in safe with a 65% response at the *strongly disagree* and *disagree*

levels. When these responses are partnered with item #15, “I miss speaking Arabic when I’m unable to use it for a while,” whereas non-residents experienced little disassociation with 34% at the *strongly agree* and *agree* levels, along with a noticeable 30% “I don’t know” finding, the residents noticed the absence of their primary linguistic bond by reporting 54% strong or general agreement. In this category, the figures indicate an overall accord in the areas of the importance of Arabic while exhibiting differences in personal experience.

Table 23: Attitudes of Non-Residents about Arabic

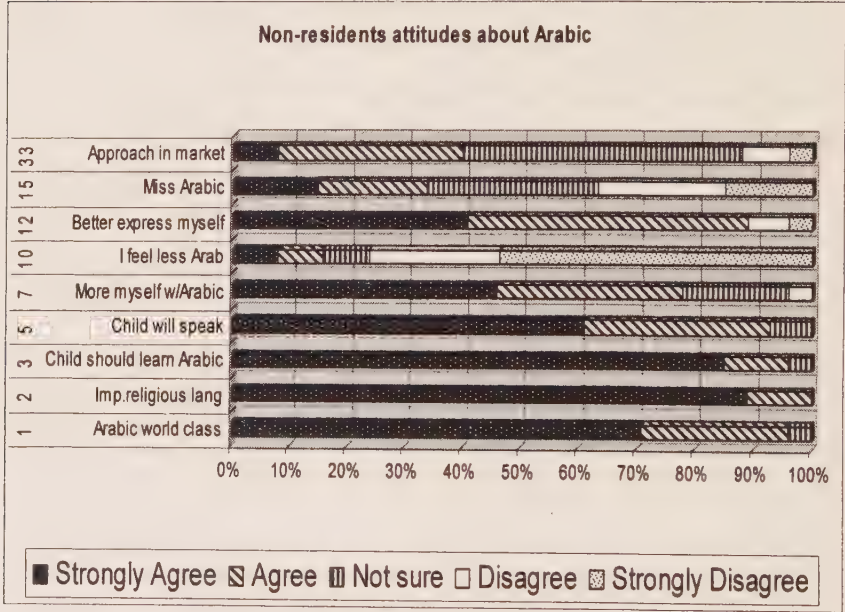
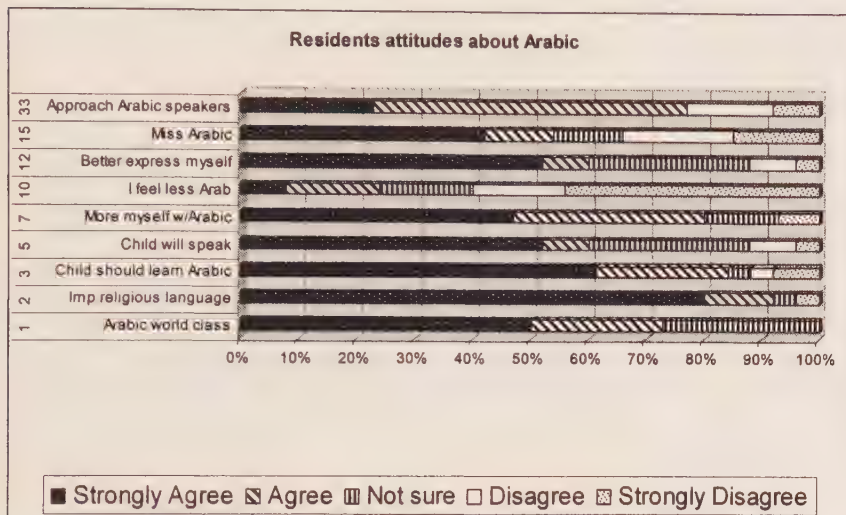


Table 24: Attitudes of Residents about Arabic



The second area of investigation, bilingual-bicultural experiences (Tables 25 and 26), takes the information from Tables 23 and 24 and then applies it to the native Arabic speakers' life knowledge.

Table 25: Bilingual-Bicultural Experiences of Non-Residents

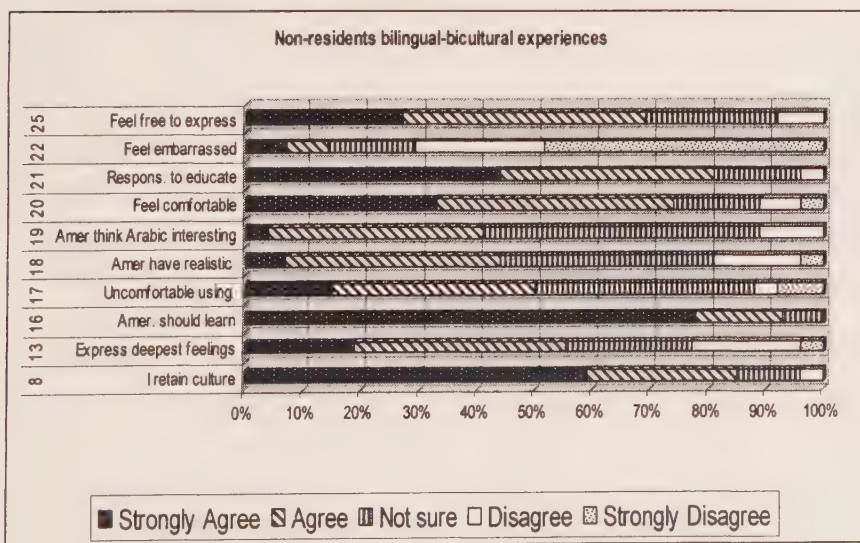
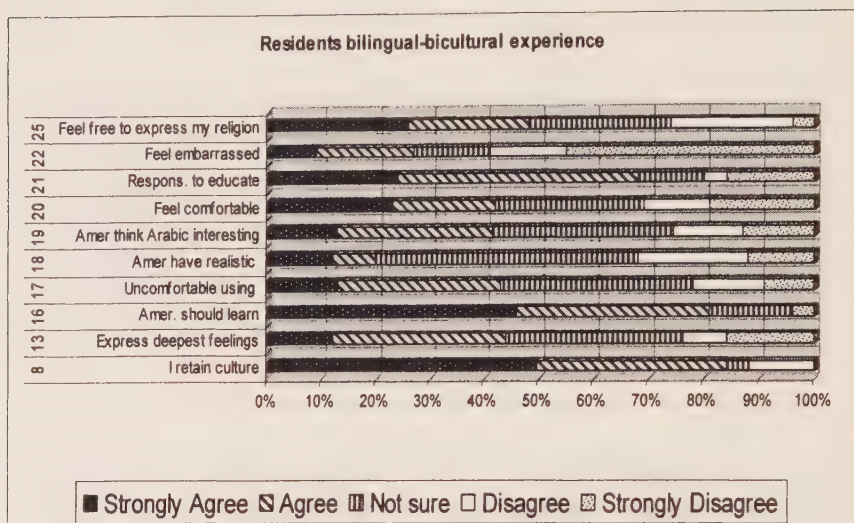


Table 26: Bilingual-Bicultural Experience of Residents



Intriguing results surfaced as a paradox between *expressed comfort in use* and *actual use* demonstrated by the responses in Table 21. In Table 25 and Table 26, many of the subjects professed few constraints in relation to their personal comfort level or any noticeable embarrassment with the Allāh Lexicon in an English-speaking environment, yet far fewer actually use the Allāh Lexicon when speaking English in the United States, or in English dominant environments overseas. In Tables 25 and 26, both the residents and non-residents responded to statements regarding comfort within transfer and code-switching of Arabic phrases when speaking English. These statements were phrased both positively and negatively. Details regarding these statements are given in Table 17.

Table 27: Transfer Evidence Based on Comfort and Freedom Statements

Attitude Statements Regarding Transfer	Residents Strongly Agree %	Residents Agree %	Non- residents Strongly Agree %	Non- residents Agree %
Item #17: I feel uncomfortable using Arabic phrases when I speak English with native speakers of that language.	.13	.30	.15	.35
Item #22: I feel embarrassed or shy about using Arabic phrases like <i>inshā' Allāh</i> or <i>alḥamdulillāh</i> with Americans.	.09	.18	.07	.07
Item #20: I feel comfortable using words like <i>inshā' Allāh</i> or <i>alḥamdulillāh</i> when speaking English with friends, professors, and colleagues.	.23	.19	.33	.41
Item #25: I feel free to express my religion and culture in my everyday speech, even if this means using Arabic words and phrases.	.26	.22	.27	.42

Results for the items above suggest a reasonable balance within the resident group between their perceptions of comfort and discomfort in items 17, 20, 22, and 25. They reveal a lack of discomfort, with 43% agreement for the *strongly agree* and *agree* responses combined for # 17 and only 27% *strongly agree* and *agree* responses with #22. At the same time, the residents assert feelings of comfort and freedom for statements #20 and 25 with 42% and 48% *strongly agree* and *agree* responses respectively. Midrange figures such as these support both the difficulties with transfer of pragmatically rooted vocabulary and an awareness of cultural differences. Ironically, the non-residents experienced more confusion with these statements, proclaiming both a high level of comfort (#20) at 74%, and a 50% result for discomfort (#17). Contradictory results such as this may point to conflicting feelings about the use of such phrases, or about a level of unconsciousness about the reasons and occasions for their use or their choice not to use. Despite the result for #17, the non-residents disclose little embarrassment in using the Allāh Lexicon, admitting to only 14% *strongly agree* and *agree* responses combined, which is half that of the residents.

While the residents and non-residents find themselves in accord for #17, with very similar responses at all levels, it is interesting to note the level of

irresoluteness for both groups in the area of “not sure” (Tables 25 and 26). Thirty-five percent of residents and 38% of non-residents reported “not sure” for this item. For at least a third of the survey pool then, there would seem to be ambivalence about whether they experience discomfort or not when practicing code-switching or cultural transfer when speaking English.

Wurgaft cites McNeill (1986), who cautioned that there are pitfalls arising when scholars try to analyze groups, asserting that they are “trying to perform a feat of intellectual prestidigitation, subordinating their own local social universe along with everyone else's to patterns and processes of which those concerned remain largely or entirely unaware” (1995: 68). Nevertheless, meaningful numbers of respondents in both groups declared themselves comfortable using the Allāh Lexicon. The figures above suggest that many of these individuals continue to use the lexicon when speaking English. Further investigation, however, challenges that assumption, indicating that despite their stated level of comfort in using these phrases, few actually do.

Of the 40 Arabic L1 speakers who responded to the transfer portion of the survey contained in Section IV, only 20 acknowledged using items from the Allāh Lexicon aloud in an English-speaking environment. Of these 20, only 11 were residents and 9 were non-residents. Respondents had the option to list as many as ten phrases which they use when speaking English. Informants were able to choose those words and phrases they continued to use when speaking English either from their list of essential phrases or from the broader list of 32 Allāh Lexicon phrases. For the 40 who responded, there was a possibility of 400 phrases. The 20 who affirmed use of Allāh Lexicon phrases when speaking English had the opportunity to list as many as 200 entries, that is, 20 respondents with 10 phrase entries each. Yet, for this group, only 107 phrases were given.

Of the 107 items listed as spoken aloud, most can be ascribed to the non-resident group, 65 all told (Table 16). Non-residents, living as they do in an Arabic-dominant environment, are apparently more comfortable transferring the frequency and pragmatics from the Allāh Lexicon into their English conversation. Respondents who have been in the U.S. longer rarely use the Allāh Lexicon aloud

when speaking English. They do not use the phrases in Arabic, nor translated into English, when speaking that language.

These results seem to controvert the work of Seymour-Jorn, who found a growing study of and appreciation for Arabic among Arab-Americans and newer immigrants with children. She cites Haddad and Smith (1996) and Barzangi (1996) as evidence of the "strong concern of Arab-Americans with maintaining their religious and cultural identities" (111). A variety of groups were investigated during research in the heavily Arab populations of Wisconsin, and a list of predictable reasons for reinforcing Arabic studies devolved. At the forefront was the ability to stay connected with the homeland, followed by a desire to read the Qur'ān in the original and a determination to retain their cultural identity and to avoid becoming 'too Americanized.' She also learned that "Palestinian students in particular expressed the idea that knowing...was more or less required of them in order to truly 'be' Palestinian" (Seymour-Jorn 121). Perhaps more telling was their conviction that by knowing and using Arabic they would "avoid being an 'ugly Arab-American:' one who expects Arab friends and relatives to deal with him in an American cultural and linguistic idiom" (121).

These reactions reveal a high level of intensity around the use and knowledge of Arabic while continuing to live in the United States. Also evident is a sense of disenchantment with the expectations of assimilation dictated by American culture in general. A mirror of these sentiments is found in the results for survey item #14, "If possible, in the future I would prefer to live and work in an Arabic-speaking country." Residents answered with 64% at the *strongly agree* and *agree* levels combined. Having lived elsewhere, the culture they sprang from and know best continues to call for their return. Non-residents, for this same statement, were far less eager to remain in their homeland or an Arabic-speaking country, registering only 30% assent.

10. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that the Allāh Lexicon is a vital and required feature of Arabic as spoken by Muslim members of that language group. Through the Qur'ān, Allāh has dictated its wide use. In response, tradition has found countless circumstances and formations for its delivery. Some of these phrases, reminders of Allāh's power, characteristics, capacity and identity have been seen to appear in conversation multiple times each day in venues from the marketplace to the television news. Yet, despite the fact that Arabic speakers and Muslims include this virtually limitless lexicon of religious referents in Arabic discourse, they do not report consistent transfer of that use, either in Arabic or in English translation, to their English speech.

Rather like the *iftah yā simsim* ["Open sesame"] that 'Alī Bābā uttered as he was faced with a sealed door opening onto unknown treasures or terror, this study has compelling implications for future research in the areas of loss of culture, acceptance of diversity, regional lexical choices, and academic awareness. Issues raised in this study straddled the boundaries between religion and language, Islām and Arabic specifically, and the implications must necessarily view both of those elements as well.

While teaching in Morocco, one of our more conservative students asked at the beginning of the year if we could teach English without the insertion of American culture. He and others in his group did not desire any contact with the hyper-sexual, media-driven, violent, and acquisitive features of American culture. Our response was that since we would be exploring scientific and technology-oriented texts and vocabulary, populist cultural norms would not come into play. We could not help adding that it was not our intention to teach them to be American, but rather give them the tools they needed to be the best African and Moroccan science and tech professionals they could be. The narrow band of language that we worked with over the course of nine months included, therefore, no mention of sex, drugs, and rock and roll, or the stars and stripes, apple pie, and Uncle Sam. As a result, those students know more about a specific area of language use, but not the people nor the culture of those who speak it.

In the United States, we are facing a similar situation. Our government and media have long made wholesale judgments and doled out information based on a marginal range of understanding of Arabs, Arabic and Islām, thereby extending a tradition of rejection of Islām and its peoples that stretches back to Cotton Mather, a Puritan scholar, who in 1721 denounced the Prophet Muḥammad as a “thick-skulled Prophet” (Majīd B10). Although Puritans did not import slaves, Maher’s antipathy may have been in response to the influx of Muslim slaves from Africa who were easily identified by their names, their refusal to eat pork, and their use of the words *Muḥammad* and *Allāh* (Turner Mehdī 1-2). The only thing of importance that these slaves could carry with them was a devotion to Islām, which their subsequent American owners forbade them to practice. Indeed, one slave, ‘Umar ibn Sayyid wrote a lengthy treatise in which he begged to be released from slavery and allowed to return to Africa. That he could write at all flew in the face of a popular American belief that slaves were illiterate and people of lower capabilities. Yet Ibn Sayyīd wrote his essay in Arabic and quoted the Qur’ān extensively, which succeeded in bringing to frightening bloom a vibrant literary contradiction to the very societal tenets which allowed for slavery in the first place (Hunwick 62-63).

Along with a consistent pattern of derision of Islām, there exists the currently promoted belief that there is something inherently violent buried within the history and essence of the religion, a violence totally distinct from Christianity’s own history of Crusades, slaughters, Inquisitions, and forced conversions (Hassan 1995: 1-7). Riding in tandem is a corresponding suspicion of the language itself which, paired with ethnic discrimination, leads young Arabic-speaking boys and girls to hide their heritage, refuse to speak the language of their parents and grandparents and take on names like Sam instead of Sulaymān, or Abe instead of Ibrāhīm.¹⁶ Literary works written in recent decades detail the impact and corrosive effects arising out of 1) an ethnic identity under attack, and 2) a denial of ethnic identity (DuBois, 1983; Kingston, 1976; Malcom X, 1965; Rodríguez, 1982). In the work of Gurin and Epps (1975) and Maldonado (1975), Jean Phinney has found support for her claim that “ethnic identity is

crucial to the self-concept and psychological functioning of ethnic group members... Critical issues include the degree and quality of involvement that is maintained with one's own culture and heritage, ways of responding to and dealing with the dominant group's often disparaging views of their group" (1990: 499).

Given these factors, a closer look at the long-term impact of the loss of key words and essential phrases from a native culture and language is indicated. The degree to which bilingual speakers are encouraged to express L1 cultural norms in the second language may determine the level of comfort and affinity they retain toward their first language and its culture, and the degree of ease and community they feel with English-only speakers. In addition, follow-up studies will indicate how the fortunes and attitudes of Arabs in America or overseas have altered or solidified their opinions on all of these topics. As demonstrated by this study, Allāh Lexicon units represent both "key words" as described by Wierzbicka, and pragmatically functional units. Is a diminishing use of the Allāh Lexicon evidence of an acceptance of Western values and customs on the part of Arabic-speaking immigrants, or merely a bow to location, convenience and bias?

Other questions for additional study include how the younger generation accommodates these culturally imperative concepts in their life either overseas or domestically, how different nationalities and regions use the lexicon, and which items from the Allāh Lexicon are favored and which omitted. Cultural and anthropological discourse studies, similar to Deborah Kapchan's *Gender in the Marketplace*, along with extensive on-site data collection enhanced by transcriptions of material disclosing use of the lexicon throughout the Arabic-speaking world, also need to be launched.

From a societal perspective, a better understanding of Arabic-speaking cultures, Islāmic cultures, and the manifestation of reverence acts within Arabic may curtail elements of the negative bias and stereotyping evident in Western media and the minds of many Americans. A reduction in prejudice will greatly benefit the younger members of America's Arabic-speaking Muslim population, many of whom regularly experience the revulsion and suspicion of Americans

toward their culture at school and in their new neighborhoods. As mentioned earlier, many teachers are unaware of their own insensitivity in dealing with children from other nations:

Violations of beliefs and practices in this area of culture probably result in the most serious conflicts which occur between home and school. Forcing a child to wash "dirt" off his face (when it had ritual significance), bringing human bones to class for a science lesson, and insisting that children eat lunch during a period of a prescribed religious fast are all examples of very real mistakes made by teachers who did not understand the religion of their students. (Saville-Troike)

There is an additional opportunity within future studies of the Allāh Lexicon and that is developing an appreciation for a language and culture that continues to challenge its own human frailty by reinforcing its commitment to spiritual awareness through a vast catalogue of words and phrases that sustain and support that goal.

End Notes

¹ Editor's Note: As Dilworth Parkinson has noted: "knowledge of the Qur'ān and classical Arabic is what really makes for fine Arabic" (68).

² Editor's Note: According to one view, the various regional variations of Arabic are languages, and not dialects, as they are not mutually intelligible. Most linguists, however, consider them to be dialects since the link to classical Arabic continues to be maintained. The linguistic situation in the Arab world might be compared to that which existed in parts of Europe around the year 1000, when Latin remained the official language of the Church, the state and the school, while the common people spoke Romance languages.

³ Editor's Note: In his study of MSA abilities among Egyptians, Dilworth Parkinson found that those with less than a high school education appear to have a minimal ability to understand basic sentences at a very slow rate, and to express themselves on very concrete straightforward topics; they can use MSA in a pinch, but efforts at longer communication in MSA are likely to be judged more colloquial than MSA (69), the average urban Egyptian with a high school education might be described as abominably fluent, the average Egyptian with a college education could be described as a competent user of MSA, able to express him/herself fluently but in a manner so flawed that it is far from the prescriptive standard, while those with a specialized Arabic education approach the standard in speaking and writing much more closely, but do not reach professional competence (69).

⁴ Editor's Note: It is quite common for Arabs to claim that their particular dialect is closest to classical Arabic. When asked which dialect is the closest to the Qur'ān, the Egyptians claim that it is Egyptian, the Lebanese claim that it is Lebanese, the Yemenis claim that it is Yemeni, the Moroccans claim that it is Moroccan, with Orientalists endorsing one of these claims, typically the dialect that they themselves have studied. However, since all Arabic dialects have evolved from classical Arabic, none can claim supremacy or superiority over another as being closest to the Qur'ānic original. All dialects are equally distant from their source of origin and arguing about which one is the purest is as silly as debating whether Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, Castilian, French, Italian or Rumanian is closest to classical Latin.

⁵ Editor's Note: When it comes to translating the Qur'ān, 'Abdullāh Yūsuf 'Alī has observed that "[i]n many cases the Arabic words and phrases are so pregnant of meaning that a translator would be in despair unless he were allowed to explain all that he understands by them" and concedes that it is "perhaps impossible to catch something of the inimitable symphony of the Qur'ān in another language" (xiii).

⁶ Editor's Note: As Shaykh Saddūq (d. 991-92) has explained, the will of Allāh means the knowledge and not the decree of Allāh.

⁷ Editor's Note: The Islāmic tradition has always relied upon *'aql*, reasoning, as opposed to *naql* or tradition. Wahhābī and Salafī fundamentalism is thus an innovation and an aberration, an assault against the Islāmic spirit.

⁸ Editor's Note: The middle ground between the proponents of free will and predestination is found among the Shī'ites, whose theological stance is as follows: *lā jabra wa lā*

tafwīda bal amrun bayna amrayn: Neither *jabr* nor *tafwīd*; but something intermediate between the two [extreme] alternatives (Muṭahhārī 1985).

⁹ Editor's Note: Before World War I, Arab identity was tribal, not national. Arab nationalism was the creation of Western imperial powers.

¹⁰ Editor's Note: American soldiers serving in the Middle East regularly refer to Arabs as "dune coons," "rag heads," and "sand niggers." One does not win the hearts of the "liberated" through such "terms of endearment."

¹¹ Editor's Note: As evidence that racism is the result of blind hate and ignorance, a Sikh gas station attendant was murdered after September 11th. Hell-bent on taking the "war on terror" home against American residents and citizens, his attackers mistook him for a "fuckin' A-rab."

¹² Editor's Note: The value of learning languages is generally not as appreciated in the United States as it is in Canada, Europe, and the rest of the world. Many Americans believe that if you add something you lose something, when in reality you are enriching yourself. This negative attitude towards linguistic diversity can be traced as far back as Teddy Roosevelt (d. 1919), who said that "There is room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language, for we must assure that the crucible turns out Americans and not some random dwellers in a polyglot boarding house" (www.freerepublic.com/~chudogg). The Founding Fathers, however, had a positive attitude towards language. Benjamin Franklin (d. 1790) spoke English and French and published the first German-language newspaper in North America. John Adams (d. 1826) was trilingual, mastering English, Dutch and French, and Thomas Jefferson (d. 1826) was multilingual, speaking Greek, Latin, French, Spanish, Italian and German.

¹³ Editor's Note: In this case, the respondent has not only abandoned the use of the Allāh Lexicon but has even reached a point where he cannot identify the appropriate expression which is supposed to be employed. It is *bismillāh*, rather than *Allāhu Akbar*, which is uttered prior to eating.

¹⁴ Editor's Note: With the rise of xenophobia, fueled by the "war on terrorism," negative stereotyping in the mass media, racial and religious profiling, the loss of civil rights as a result of the Patriot Act and the dramatic increase in hate crimes, many Arabs and Muslims feel a genuine sense of insecurity living in the United States. For a large part, American Muslims are afraid to practice their religion in public, are wary of wearing traditional clothing, particularly the Islāmic headscarf in the case of women, and are anxious about speaking Arabic or other languages besides English. As a sad note, many African Americans, who have typically been able to identify with the disinherited, were relieved that Arabs and Muslims being profiled as it gave blacks a break from their daily discrimination.

¹⁵ Editor's Note: A similar natural flow of Allāh expressions in English and Arabic can also be found in the speech of English-speaking Muslim converts/reverts, an area in which little or no research has been done.

¹⁶ Editor's Note: Due to discrimination, fear of persecution, stereotyping, the inability to find work, or an ardent desire to assimilate, Arab and Muslim immigrants to the Western world have a long history of Anglicizing their names. In the United States, many of the Syrians who reached the Upper Mid-West in the 1900s adopted English names. In more recent times, and particularly in response to the rise in anti-Arab sentiment which followed the tragedy of 9/11 and the Iraq War, many Muslims have changed their names to avoid harassment.

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Chapter 5

The Most Beautiful Names:

The Philosophical Foundation of the Allāh Lexicon

By John A. Morrow and Luis Alberto Vittor

1. Introduction

According to Muslim tradition, the most beautiful names of Allāh [*asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*] are ninety-nine in number, all of which are found, in one form or another, in the Holy Qur'ān (7:180; 17:110; 20:8; 59:24). As the essence of Allāh, Islām, and the Qur'ān, the divine names have played an important role in the interpretation of Islāmic scripture.¹ Invoked in prayer and in common speech, the divine names are also employed during *dhikr* or remembrance of Allāh. These ninety-nine names, one hundred minus one, form the core of the Allāh Lexicon, and the source from which the original body of expressions were drawn.² In the following pages we will examine the most beautiful names and how they form the philosophical foundation of the Allāh Lexicon. We will see that among the Ṣūfīs, be they Sunnī or Shī'ī, the ninety-nine names take on heightened significance as steps along the path of spiritual perfection.³ Beyond its evident social functions, the Allāh Lexicon belongs to the spiritual sphere, reaching its peak in the universal archetype of the Perfect Person who, by reaching the state of sublime submission, has become the microcosmic manifestation of all the divine names. Let us now examine the ninety-nine most beautiful names, commencing with the name *Allāh* itself, whose philological origin has been one of the most difficult to discern, and which continues to puzzle Arabic linguists.

2. The Origin of the Name *Allāh*⁴

While the Arabic language has one the richest vocabularies in the world, *Allāh*, its most important content word, the one with the highest functional yield, has been a source of controversy since the dawn of Arabic linguistics.⁵ In fact,

some speculate that the mysterious origin of the name Allāh may be a reflection of the mystery of the Divine Essence.

According to Rāzī (d. 1210), al-Khalīl, Sībawayhi (d. 8th c.), and most of the formulators of the Muslim fundamentals [*al-uṣūlīyūn*], held that the word *Allāh* was *murtajal*, namely, that it had no derivation.⁶ The position of this group of scholars is summarized by Muḥammad ‘Alī in the following terms:

The word *Allāh* being a proper name is *jāmid*, that is to say, it is not derived from any other word. Nor has it any connection with the word *ilāh* [god or object of worship], which is either derived from the root *aliha*, meaning *taḥayyara* or “he became astonished,” or it is a changed form of *walah* from the root *waliha*, which means “he became infatuated.” It is sometimes said that *Allāh* is a contracted form of *al-ilāh*, but that is a mistake, for if *al* in *Allāh* were an additional prefix, the form *yā Allāh*, which is correct, would not have been permitted since *yā al-ilāh* or *yā al-Raḥmān* are not permissible. Moreover, this supposition would mean that there were different gods [*ālihah*, pl. of *ilāh*], one of which became gradually known as *al-ilāh* and was then contracted into *Allāh*. This is against the facts, since Allāh ‘has always been the name of the Eternal Being’ (Hughes). Nor has the word *Allāh* ever been applied to any but the Divine Being, according to all authorities on Arabic lexicology. The Arabs had numerous *ilāhs* or gods but none of them was ever called *Allāh*, while a Supreme Being called *Allāh* was recognized above them all as the Creator of the universe (29:61), and no other deity, however great, was so regarded. (‘Alī 156-57)

These arguments are echoed in Lane’s *Arabic-English Lexicon*, where he states that “*Allāh*...is the proper name applied to the Being who exists necessarily, by Himself, comprising all the attributes of perfection, a proper name denoting the True God...the *al* being inseparable from it, not derived.”

According to another group of linguists, the word *Allāh* was borrowed from the Hebrew *Eloh* or the Aramaic *Alaha*. Whether or not it was borrowed, the word *Allāh* does indeed appear to be closely related to similar words found in Hebrew, Aramaic, and ancient Arabic or Sabaeen (Lane 82: *Oxford Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 61). In Genesis 1:1, the name for God is *Elohīm*, a plural form of אֱלֹהִים [*eloh*]. This is undoubtedly the original pronunciation, but the Bible as it is pointed today, and in latter Hebrew, the word is *elo’ah*, with the accent on the

“o.” If one looks up the root alef-lamed-heh (a-l-h) in Milon Ben-Y’hudaah’s *Ivri-Angli* [BenYehuda’s *Hebrew-English Dictionary*] one finds that the root itself is derived from an older word, *el*, meaning God, deity, power, strength. Whether alef-lamed-heh is derived from aleph-lamed it presently impossible to ascertain as little is known about the bilateral roots that may have been around in the earliest stages of Proto-Semitic. Without diacritical marks, the Hebrew *eloh* can easily be pronounced as *alah*. The pronunciation of *eloh* may be a later form of the original *alah*. The Canaanitic Shift, a linguistic phenomenon, supports this. In Hebrew, the following phonetic changes may have taken place: a>e; a>o, u>o, s>sh, b>v, hence you have *eloh* instead of *alah* and *musha* instead of *mūsa*, *shalom* instead of *salām*, and *navi* instead of *nabī*. Not surprisingly, the name for God is *alah* in Aramaic, *alaha* in Syriac, which is a dialect of Aramaic, both of which are related to the Proto-Semitic word for god which is *il* (Oshana). As Giron explains, there are “obvious linguistic and etymological connections between the respective words for God in these closely related Semitic languages [e.g. *Allāh*, *Alah*, and *Eloh* being related to *Ilah*, *Eel*, and *El*, respectively].” He concludes that “the ancient Semitic names for God [*Allāh* and *Elohīm*] are actually the same.”

According to the majority of linguists, however, the name *Allāh* is derived [*mushtaqq*, *manqūl*] from *al-ilāh*, “the God,” “the One God” or, better yet, “the Divine.”⁷ This of course is the same as the Hebrew *el*, the Ugaritic *il*, and the Akkadian *ilu*, all of which express the sense of “power.” If *Allāh* is derived from *al-ilāh*, then it is not of Hebrew or Aramaic origin. Whether Arabic is the mother of all Semitic languages, as some scholars claim, is highly controversial and is presently impossible to prove or disprove empirically.⁸ Whether Semitic languages can even be subjected to the hierarchies found in the Indo-European family is questionable. As the Dutch scholar Kees Versteegh cautions, “there is little basis for a genealogical classification of the kind current in Indo-European linguistics, and it may be preferable to stay within the bounds of a descriptive and typological analysis of the relationships between Arabic and its Semitic neighbors” (21). The claim that Arabic is the youngest of the Semitic languages is clearly erroneous as it is based on the recency of the Namara stone which

preserves the earliest example of written Arabic. As Yāsir Suleimān explains, “Tying the age of a language to the date of its first written records is based on an untenable premise that ties language to writing” (2006). If it was confirmed that ancient Arabic was the common ancestor of the Central Semitic languages, namely, the old Arabian languages, and the northern Semitic languages like Ugaritic, Canaanite, Phoenician, Aramaic, and Hebrew, then *Allāh* may indeed related to the Hebrew *Eloh* and the Aramaic *Alaha*, not in that it was borrowed from those languages, but in that it was borrowed by them. If *Eloh* and *Alaha* were not borrowed from *Allāh*, they are surely related, sharing a common origin, which the Arabic language may have retained as it contains some of the most ancient and archaic features of the Semitic languages. In fact, comparative Semitic grammars, like those of John Huehnergard and Patrick Bennet, suggest that the linguistic, grammatical, and syntactic paradigms are virtually always in favor of reconstructing Proto-Semitic using the Arabic paradigms. According to Michael Carasik, this is largely because Arabic has preserved many more consonants than the other Semitic languages, except for Ugaritic, which was not known until seventy-five years ago. As he explains, “Even if Arabic were the closest of the Semitic languages we know today to Proto-Semitic, this would still not make it the language from which the other Semitic languages derived.”

Regardless of the outcome of the debate surrounding the origin of the divine name, one thing is for certain, *Allāh* is not a modified version of the pagan goddess *al-Lāt*. This latter claim, made by Muḥammad’s heathen adversaries, and reiterated by fundamentalist Christians in contemporary times, attempts to link the word *Lāt* to the word *Allāh*, ‘*Uzzā* to ‘*Azīz*, and *Manāt* to *al-Mannān*: *Lāt*, ‘*Uzza* and *Manat* were idols whereas *al-‘Azīz* [The Most Powerful] and *al-Mannān* [The Generous] were epithets of *Allāh*⁹. The following verse was revealed in relation to this claim: “The most beautiful names belong to *Allāh*: so call upon Him by them; but shun such men as desecrate His Names: for what they do, they will soon be requited” (7:180). As Rāzī (d. 1210) and Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā’ī (d. 933) explained, the word *Allāh* is compounded of the definite article *al* and *ilāh*, which means “god” or “deity.”¹⁰ This etymology is consistent with Imām Ja’far al-

Şādiq's explanation found in *al-Kāfi*: "the word *Allāh* derives from *ilāh*" (Kulaynī 286).

The question arises as to whether it is appropriate to translate the Arabic term *Allāh* as *God*. There are many Western Muslims who, due to the lack of a better translation, accept it and speak about God, when in reality they are thinking about Allāh. Although the Arabic term *Allāh* is often translated as "God," it is merely a question of convention or concession, because it is improper and inadequate to translate the term in this sense because Allāh is not an *ilāh* [god]. For the Arabs from the Days of Ignorance [*al-jāhiliyyah*], the *ālihah* [plural of *ilāh*] were the gods they adored: man-made idols and sacred objects which the expression *lā ilāha illā Allāh* [there is no God but Allāh] denounced as unworthy of worship. It may be more accurate, instead, to translate the name *Allāh* as "the Divine" because Allāh is not only the most exalted name of the Reality or Supreme Truth, but also the principle of divine unity as we see in Sūrat al-Ikhlās: "Say: He is Allāh, the One." The principle of divine unity [*al-tawḥīd*] consists in worshipping no other deity but the Divine as expressed in the first formula of the *shahādah*, the profession of unity [*kalimat al-tawḥīd*]: *lā ilāha illā Allāh* [there is no god but the Divine]. Although the Indo-European *God*, *Bog*, *Baga*, *Deus* and *Theos* are the closest translations to the Arabic *Allāh*, their polytheistic philosophical encumbrances make them inadequate.¹¹ For example, in English, with a change in capitalization only, god to God, the believer can segue from polytheism to monotheism. This is not to say that Allāh is not God and God is not Allāh. Allāh is God, the same Judeo-Christian-Islāmic God, the God of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad, and not another divinity. For many Muslims, however, the minor variant between god and God does not offer sufficient distinction for One and Only God who is All-Powerful, All-Seeing, All-Knowing and Omnipresent. Even the Hebrew *Eloh* cannot serve as a cognate for *Allāh* as it can be made masculine, feminine, singular, and plural. The only equivalents for *Allāh* come from Semitic languages and would include the Hebrew *YHWH* and the Aramaic *Alah*. As the One, the Unique, the Genderless and the Indivisible, Allāh is not a "god." He is *Allāh*, *al-Ilāh*, the Divine, *par*

excellence, the essence of all the divine attributes.

3. The Ninety-Nine Most Beautiful Names

In a *ḥadīth* [tradition] transmitted by Abū Hurayra (d. 677) in Sunnī sources, and Imām ‘Alī (d. 661) in Shī‘ite sources, the Prophet Muḥammad taught that “Allāh has ninety-nine names.”¹² The most beautiful names generally include:

1. *Allāh*
2. *al-Raḥmān*: The All Beneficent
3. *al Raḥīm*: The Most Merciful
4. *al-Malik*: The King, The Sovereign
5. *al-Quddūs*: The Most Holy
6. *al-Salām*: The Peace
7. *al-Mu‘min*: The Guarantor
8. *al-Muḥaymin*: The Guardian, The Preserver
9. *al-‘Azīz*: The Almighty, the Self-Sufficient
10. *al-Jabbār*: The Powerful, the Irresistible
11. *al-Mutakabbir*: The Tremendous
12. *al-Khāliq*: The Creator
13. *al-Bārī‘*: The Maker
14. *al-Muṣawwir*: The Fashioner of Forms
15. *al-Ghaḥḥār*: The Ever Forgiving
16. *al-Qaḥḥār*: The All-Compelling Subduer
17. *al-Waḥḥāb*: The Bestower
18. *al-Razzāq*: The Ever Providing
19. *al-Fattāḥ*: The Victory Giver
20. *al-‘Alīm*: The All-Knowing, the Omniscient
21. *al-Qābiḍ*: The Restrainer, the Straightener
22. *al-Bāsiṭ*: The Expander, the Munificent
23. *al-Khāfiḍ*: the Abaser
24. *al-Rāfi‘*: the Exalter
25. *al-Mu‘izz*: the Giver of Honor
26. *al-Mudhill*: the Giver of Dishonor
27. *al-Samī‘*: the All-Hearing
28. *al-Baṣīr*: the All-Seeing
29. *al-Ḥakam*: the Judge, the Arbitrator
30. *al-‘Adl*: the Utterly Just
31. *al-Laṭīf*: The Subtly Kind
32. *al-Khabīr*: the All-Aware
33. *al-Ḥalīm*: the Forbearing, the Indulgent
34. *al-‘Azīm*: the Magnificent, the Infinite
35. *al-Ghaḥḥūr*: the All-Forgiving

36. *al-Shakūr*: The Grateful
37. *al-'Aliyy*: the Sublimely Exalted
38. *al-Kabīr*: the Great
39. *al-Hafīẓ*: the Preserver
40. *al-Muqīt*: the Nourisher
41. *al-Ḥasīb*: the Reckoner
42. *al-Jalīl*: the Majestic
43. *al-Karīm*: the Bountiful, the Generous
44. *al-Raqīb*: the Watchful
45. *al-Mujīb*: the Responsive, the Answerer
46. *al-Wāsi'*: the Vast, the All-Encompassing
47. *al-Ḥakīm*: the Wise
48. *al-Wadūd*: the Loving, the Kind One
49. *al-Majīd*: the All-Glorious
50. *al-Bā'ith*: the Raiser of the Dead
51. *al-Shahīd*: the Witness
52. *al-Ḥaqq*: the Truth, the Real
53. *al-Wakīl*: the Trustee, the Dependable
54. *al-Qawiyy*: the Strong
55. *al-Matīn*: the Firm, the Steadfast
56. *al-Waliyy*: the Protecting Friend, Patron, and Helper
57. *al-Ḥamīd*: the All-Praiseworthy
58. *al-Muḥsī*: the Accounter, the Numberer of All
59. *al-Mubdi'*: the Producer, Originator, and Initiator of All
60. *al-Mu'īd*: The Reinstator Who Brings Back All
61. *al-Muhyī*: the Giver of Life
62. *al-Mumīt*: the Bringer of Death, the Destroyer
63. *al-Ḥayy*: the Ever-Living
64. *al-Qayyūm*: the Self-Subsisting Sustainer of All
65. *al-Wājid*: the Perceiver, the Finder, the Unfailing
66. *al-Mājid*: the Illustrious, the Magnificent
67. *al-Wāḥid*: The One, the All-Inclusive, the Indivisible
68. *al-Ṣamad*: the Self-Sufficient, the Impregnable, the Eternally Besought of All, the Everlasting
69. *al-Qādir*: the All-Able
70. *al-Muqtadir*: the All-Determiner, the Dominant
71. *al-Muqaddim*: the Expediter, He who brings forward
72. *al-Mu'akkhkhīr*: the Delayer, He who puts far away
73. *al-Awwal*: the First
74. *al-Akhir*: the Last
75. *al-Zāhir*: the Manifest, the All-Victorious
76. *al-Bāṭin*: the Hidden, the All-Emcompassing
77. *al-Wālī*: the Patron
78. *al-Muta'ālī*: the Self-Exalted
79. *al-Bārr*: the Most Kind and Righteous
80. *al-Tawwāb*: the Ever Returning, Ever Relenting

81. *al-Muntaqim*: the Avenger
82. *al-'Afūww*: the Pardoner, the Effacer of Sins
83. *al-Ra'ūf*: the Compassionate, the All-Pitying
84. *Mālik al-Mulk*: the Owner of All-Sovereignty
85. *Dhū al-Jalāl wa al-Ikrām*: the Lord of Majesty and Generosity
86. *al-Muqsīt*: the Equitable, the Requirer
87. *al-Jāmi'*: the Gatherer, the Unifier
88. *al-Ghaniyy*: the All-Rich, the Independent
89. *al-Mughnī*: the Enricher, the Emancipator
90. *al-Māni'*: the Withholder, the Shielder, the Defender
91. *al-Ḍarr*: the Distressor, the Harmer [from *ḥadūth*]
92. *al-Nāfi'*: the Propitious, the Benefactor
93. *al-Nūr*: the Light
94. *al-Hādī*: the Guide
95. *al-Badī'*: the Incomparable, the Originator
96. *al-Bāqī*: the Ever-Enduring and Immutable
97. *al-Wārith*: the Heir, the Inheritor of All
98. *al-Rashīd*: the Guide, the Infallible Teacher, and Knower
99. *al-Ṣabūr*: the Patient, the Timeless

The name Allāh is the first and foremost of the ninety-nine most beautiful names. According to Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240), Allāh is a proper noun, which can qualify [*al-nu'ūt*] but can never be qualified, as it refers to the One God (Beneito 29). Not only does the name Allāh refer to the Divine, it is the universal synthesis of the divine names [*majmū' al-ṣifāt al-ilāhiyyah*] because it represents the Essence which embraces all attributes [*al-dhāt al-jāmi'ah*] (29-30). In his *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, Ibn al-'Arabī explains that Allāh is the name of the Divine Essence [*al-dhāt al-ilāhiyyah*] (7). As it is the proper name of the Divinity, the symbol of the Divine Essence, and the embodiment of all the attributes, it comes as no surprise that Allāh is the most commonly invoked of the ninety-nine names. When people invoke Allāh, however, they are not necessarily invoking the Essence, but rather, a specific attribute. As Ibn al-'Arabī explains, since the name Allāh contains every divine name, it takes, on behalf of what it names, the place of every name of God (2002: 60):

So when someone says “Oh Allāh,” look at the state which incited him to make this call and consider which divine name is specifically connected to that state. That specific name [*al-ism al-khāṣṣ*] is what the caller is calling with his words, “Oh Allāh.” For the name Allāh, by its original coinage, names the Essence of God Itself, “in whose hand is the dominion of everything” (36:83). That is why the name which refers specifically to the Essence takes the place of every divine name. (60)

Likewise, if a believer who is in need of provision says “Oh Allāh, provide for me!,” while Allāh is also the Preventer [*al-māni*’], he does not seek through his state anything but the Name ‘Provider’ [*al-razzāq*]. So, in meaning, he has only said “Oh Provider, provide for me” (247-48).

The ninety-nine names of Allāh represent divine attributes and qualities. As numerous scholars have observed, the ninety-names can be viewed as the Essence of Allāh, Islām, and the Qur’ān. Sir Edwin Arnold observes that “almost every religious idea of the Koran comes up in the long catalogue of attributes” (v). Böwering notes that the ninety-name names are a major stylistic element in the Qur’ān, representing “a cherished summary of the holy book, and a simple epitome of the theological core of Islām since early times” (248). And, finally, Purificación de la Torre points out that “La trascendencia de los nombres de Dios en el Islām y su significación no encuentra paralelismo alguno en ninguna otra religión” (13) [The transcendental nature of the names of God in Islām, as well as their meaning, finds no parallel whatsoever in any other religion].¹³ Indeed, as Böwering has remarked, the most beautiful names of Allāh “mark Islām against its sibling religions, Judaism and Christianity, which except for cabbalistic and mystical uses, did not develop a systematic theology on the basis of the divine names (Pseudo-Dionysius notwithstanding)” (248). Each divine name is a hermeneutical heaven, a drop containing an ocean. The ninety-nine most beautiful names represent core theological concepts which are conveyed through the colloquial by means of the Allāh Lexicon.

Conscious of the power of language, the Prophet assured that whoever learns the divine names, understands them, and enumerates them [*iḥṣā*] will enter

paradise, finding eternal salvation (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, and Hākim). Evidently, this does not imply that the divine attributes are numerical entities or that Allāh possesses only ninety-nine names. To enumerate the names means to invoke them in *dhikr Allāh* or remembrance of Allāh which takes on many levels in the social and spiritual realms.

As Arabic has ninety-nine names for the One God, anyone of which is theoretically likely to be used in the oath construct, Arabic speakers frequently swear by them (Sāliḥ 18). As Maḥmūd al-Khaṭīb has shown, the direct or indirect invocation of Allāh, by means of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, serves three important functions:

First, they can be used as a supportive device [unquestionable evidence given by God and His Prophet] for supporting a particular view. In this way they form an integral part of argument. Second, the Qur'ānic verses and the Traditions are, like much emotive language, strongly rhythmic, thereby they evoke feelings. Third, they help the user [the persuader] to gain a kind of trustworthiness and to be viewed by the audience as being reliable and dependable (170).

This form of *dhikr* or remembrance of Allāh serves a concrete social function in the language of persuasion. It also acts as a constant reminder of the omnipresence and omniscience of the Divine who supervises all social interaction.

In the spiritual sphere, *dhikr* or remembrance of Allāh has a strong psychological effect. As William Chittick explains in his introduction to *al-Sahīfah al-sajjadiyyah*,

From earliest times the sources confirm the power of *dhikr* to provide for human psychological and spiritual needs and to influence activity. It is not difficult to understand that reciting *yā Raḥmān, yā Raḥīm* [O All-Merciful, O All-Compassionate] will have different effects upon the believer than reciting, *lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā billāh al-'aliyy al-'aẓīm* [There is no power and no strength save in God, the All-High, the All-Mighty]. Spiritual teachers eventually developed a science of different *adhkār* [plural of *dhikr*] appropriate for all the states of the soul. (xxiii-xxiv)

The more pious Muslims are, the more they seek to savor the divine names in search of spiritual elevation, seeking redemption through remembrance. It is through the invocation of Allāh [*bi dhikr Allāh*] that they detach themselves from worldly ties and thought to unite with the Divine Presence (Ruspoli 91). This process is known as annihilation through the remembrance of Allāh [*fanā* 'an *dhikr*] (Massignon 65). Muslim mystics mention the divine names perpetually, in public, in private, openly and inwardly, verbally and mentally, in search of spiritual elevation, reciting them ritually after the daily prayers, and as a constant mantra in the back of their minds. They are witnesses and those who witness the Oneness of God to God and to the people through mention of His names. They are the *dhākirūn*, those who remember, and who are sought out by angels "who travel around the roads seeking out the people of *dhikr*" (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad). They are those who truly remember Allāh. As Pablo Beneito explains,

el *dhikr* no consiste en una repetición mecánica. Se trata de una rememoración conciente en la cual, a cada nuevo aliento, el sentido, la experiencia, el "sabor" y el "saber" de cada nombre, son incesantemente renovados en la vivencia del contemplativo gracias a la ilimitada creatividad divina. (ix)

[*dhikr* does not consist in mechanical repetition. It is a conscious act of remembrance in which, with every new breath, the meaning, the experience, the "flavor" and the "knowledge" of each name are incessantly renewed in the personal experience the contemplator thanks to unlimited divine creativity]

The omnipresence of Allāh in everyday Arabic speech represents the depth and breadth of the Allāh Lexicon, an ocean of theocentric expressions. The oceanic peaks, waves, and froth, represent the spiritual surges of the Allāh Lexicon, rising above the rest.

While Muslims are encouraged to memorize the ninety-nine names for their own benefit, learning the names by heart is not the objective: "The aim is to find the One who is named" (9). As David Burrell and Nazih Daher explain, "reciting the divine names allows us to bring God into our ambit...However, since the names are more than attributes, because Allāh uses them to reveal

Himself, saves our recitation from reducing God to our experience” (vii). Naming God, according to Purificación de la Torre, is to know God, which is why, for the Šūfīs, the divine names are a path leading to the Divine (13-14). In other words, the multifarious manifestations of Allāh in Arabic speech are an attempt to access the Divine through various verbal channels.

Besides the list of ninety-nine names, there are additional names attributed to Allāh in the Qur’ān, countless others which are known only to Him, and others which He has revealed to His angels, prophets and messengers. According to an Islāmic tradition passed down through both academic and spiritual circles, Allāh has four thousand names or attributes: one thousand of these names are known only to Allāh; one thousand are known only by Allāh and His angels [*malā’ikah*], and another one thousand are known by Allāh, His angels, His prophets and the believers; of the last one thousand, three hundred are mentioned in the Torah, three hundred in the Psalms, three hundred in the Gospel [*Injīl*], and one hundred in *al-Qur’ān al-Karīm* [the Noble Qur’ān]. One, the name of His Essence, He has kept for Himself and hidden in the Qur’ān (al-Halvetī 3). In order to embrace all of the divine names at once, the Prophet used to pray “O Allāh, I invoke you with all your beautiful names” (Ibn Mājah, Imām Mālik). By “all of the divine names,” we do not mean the ninety-nine names of Allāh, but all the names of Allāh, known and unknown, as the Prophet Muḥammad was granted “the all-comprehensive Words” [*jawāmi’ al-kalām*] (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī). According to Friedlander, the search for the hidden name motivates people to read the Qur’ān in its entirety (9). While this may indeed be the case, the search for the supreme name, the answers to all one’s prayers, must equally motivate Muslims to invoke the ninety-nine most beautiful names, as opposed to one in particular.¹⁴

The ninety-nine most beautiful names, *al-asmā’ al-ḥusnā*, are divided into various categories, names of essence and names of quality, as well as relational and non-relational attributes (Ghazalī, 1999: 15). Theologians, both Sunnī and Shī’ite, organized the ninety-nine names of Allāh into positive [*tashbīh*] and negative [*tanzīh*] attributes, demonstrating a divine duality within the divine unity, the harmony between two opposites.¹⁵ According to Twelver Shī’ite theologians,

the *ṣifāt thubūtiyyah* or positive attributes are those which are befitting Allāh. The attributes are not acquired, but inherent in the Divine. Although they are many in number, the following eight are usually mentioned. They are:

1. *Qadīm*: It means that Allāh is Eternal. He has neither beginning nor end. Nothing except Allāh is eternal.

2. *Qādir*: It means that Allāh is Omnipotent. He has power over everything and every affair.

3. *ʿAlīm*: It means that Allāh is Omniscient. He knows everything. Even our unspoken intentions and desires are not hidden from Him.

4. *Ḥayy*: It means that Allāh was always alive, and will remain alive forever.

5. *Murīd*: It means that Allāh has His own will and discretion in all affairs. He does not do anything under compulsion.

6. *Mudrik*: It means that He is All-Perceiving, *al-Sāmīʿ* [All-Hearing], *Baṣīr* [All-Seeing]. Allāh sees and hears everything without any need of eyes or ears.

7. *Mutakallim*: It means Allāh is the master of the word. He can create speech in anything, as He did in a tree for Moses and in the “curtain of light” for the Prophet Muḥammad.

8. *Ṣādiq*: It means Allāh is true in His words and promises.

The *ṣifāt salbiyyah* or negative attributes are those which cannot be found in Allāh as they are below His dignity. While they are many, the eight most important ones are normally listed. They include:

1. *Sharīk*: The word *sharīk* means a colleague or partner. Allāh has neither a colleague nor a partner in His Divinity.

2. *Murakkab*: This word means “compound” or “mixed.” Allāh is neither made, nor composed of any material. He cannot be divided even in imagination.

3. *Makān*: It means “place” Allāh is not in a place because He has no body, and He is everywhere because his power and knowledge is magnificently apparent everywhere.

4. *Hulūl*: It means “entering.” Nothing enters into Allāh nor does He enter into anything or anybody. Therefore, the belief of incarnation in any form is abhorrent to the conception of Divinity.

5. *Maḥal al-taghayyur*: This means “subject to change.” Allāh cannot change.

6. *Mar’ī*: It means “visible.” Allāh is not visible. He has not been seen, is not seen, and will never be seen.

7. *Iḥtiyāj*: It means “dependence” or “need.” Allāh is not deficient in any virtue, so He does not need anything. He is All-Perfect.

8. *Ṣifāt zā’idah*: This means “added qualifications.” The attributes of Allāh are not separate from His Being. When we say that Allāh is Omnipotent and Merciful, we do not mean that His Power and Mercy are something different from His Person. We see that a child is born without any power, and then he acquires strength day by day. It is so because power is not his person. God is not like this. He is Power Himself; Mercy Himself; Knowledge Himself; Justice Himself; Virtue Himself; Truth Himself and so on. (Rizvī)

This approach of focusing on what Allāh was not, as opposed to what He is, may have appealed to jurists and theologians; however, it was criticized by the followers of the intellectual and spiritual tradition. As Ibn al-‘Arabī explains in *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*: “The God of the rationalists is a God that nobody could ever love since he was too remote and incomprehensible” (2: 326).

Unlike the theologians who preferred to view Allāh in abstract terms, the Gnostics [‘*ārifūn*] attempted to make Allāh accessible, dividing the most beautiful names into names of power and majesty, which invoke the immanent and transcendent aspect of the Divine, and names of beauty, which invoke the loving and merciful side of the Divine.

The names of majesty and power [*asmā’ al-jalāl*] include *al-Mālik* [the Sovereign, the Owner]; *al-Akbar* [the Greatest]; *al-Fattāḥ* [the Revealer or the Opener]; *al-‘Azīm* [the Infinite]; *al-Qaḥḥār* [the Compeller]; *al-Kabīr* [the Glorious]; *al-Muqīt* [the Omnipresent]; *al-Qadīr* [the All-Powerful]; *al-Muqtadīr* [the Potent]; *al-Ghaniyy* [the Opulent]; *al-A’lā* [the Supreme]; *al-‘Aliyy* [the Highest]; *al-Qayyūm* [the Self-Sufficient]; *al-Ṣamad* [the Absolute]; *al-Muta’ālī*

[the Most Exalted]; *al-Qawiyy* [the Strongest]; *al-Matīn* [the Unbreakable]; *al-Akram* [the Most Noble]; *al-Muḥaymin* [the Guardian, the Protector]; *al-Majīd* [the Most Glorious]; *al-Ḥamīd* [The Praised]; *al-Mumīt* [the Giver of Death]; *al-Muḥīṭ* [The All-Pervasive]; *al-Kāfī* [The Sufficient]; *al-Ghālib* [the Victorious]; *al-Bāqī* [the Living]; all of them referring to His complete authority over creation and underlining his power [*al-jalāl*], which is why they are mainly masculine.

The names of beauty [*asmā' al-jamāl*] include *al-Raḥmān* [the Most Compassionate]; *al-Raḥīm* [the Most Merciful]; *al-Salām* [the Peace]; *al-Mu'min* [the Guardian of Faith]; *al-Khāliq* [The Creator]; *al-Ghaḥḥār* [the Forgiver]; *al-Ghaḥūr* [the All-Forgiving]; *al-Waḥḥāb* [the Giver of All]; *al-Razzāq* [the Provider]; *al-Shakūr* [the Rewarder of Thankfulness]; *al-Karīm* [the Most Generous]; *al-Qarīb* [the Close]; *al-Bārr* [the Benefactor]; *al-Ra'ūf* [the Clement]; *al-Tawwāb* [the Most Forgiving]; *al-Wadūd* [The Most Loving]; *al-'Afuww* [the Forgiver]; *al-Shākir* [the Thankful]; *al-Mawlā* [The Master or the Protector]; *al-Kaḥfīl* [The Most Responsible]; *al-Ghaḥīr* [the Indulgent]; *al-Hādī* [the Guide]; *al-Naṣīr* [the Defender]; *al-Rabb* [the Lord]; *al-Ḥaḥīyy* [the Humiliator]; *al-Mannān* [the Preventor of Harm]; all referring to feminine attributes such as tenderness, protection, acceptance, forgiveness, receptivity, gentleness, and so forth.

The names of majesty and power are invoked by those who are meek and seek strength from God Almighty, the slaves [*'ibād*] of Allāh, those who worship Allāh out of fear of the fire. As for the names of beauty, they are invoked by those who seek mercy and forgiveness, by the servants [*'ibād*] of Allāh, those who worship God Almighty out of a desire for the garden. The highest level of faith, however, is found among the Ṣūfīs, who worship Allāh, not out of fear of hell or a desire for paradise, but out of pure unconditional love.

Besides questions of categorization, the ninety-nine names of Allāh were treated differently by various philosophical schools. On the one hand, we find those who deny their appropriateness, feeling that the multiplicity of attributes undermined divine simplicity (Burrel and Ḍaḥer 185). This includes the Mu'tazilite who hypostatize the attributes, and so reduplicate the consideration of

God via His attributes (192). Ibn Ṭufayl, who was influenced by Mu'tazilite thought, insisted that diversity was non-existent in Allāh's nature (Hawī 64). On the other hand, we find those who take descriptive Qur'ānic texts at face value, embracing *tashbīh* or anthropomorphism (Burrel and Ḍaḥer 185). These include the Ash'arīs, the Wahhābīs, and the Salafīs. Since one may deny the reality of attributes in divinity without calling their appropriateness into question, a range of intermediate positions can be found among modern religious thinkers of Islām (185). While these debates may have had relevance in intellectual circles, they never appealed to the masses, who embraced the attributes of Allāh as means to approach His Oneness. As F.E. Peters has noted,

Although Muslims no longer argue the question of the relationship between Allāh's essence and attributes...the devotion to the 'beautiful names of God' still has an important place in Islāmic devotion, and the Muslims' primary virtue is *tawakkul* [total trust and reliance on God]. (79)

In other words, the debate has subsided, but the devotion to the Divine, by means of the most beautiful names continues.

Another controversial issue among Muslim philosophers was whether the divine names actually represented Allāh and, if so, whether they were eternal. This issue revolves around the dialectic about whether the Qur'ān is created or uncreated and the origin of language (De la Torre 24). The Mu'tazilīs argued that if languages were created, then the Qur'ān and the divine names were also created (24). In their view, language was based on human convention [*muwāda'ah*] and reasoning [*'aql*]. Faced with this doctrine, the Ash'arīs argued in favor of the eternity of the Qur'ān (24), holding that language was the product of divine instruction [*tawqīf*] and revelation [*sam'*]. Eventually, the attitude of *bi-lā kayfa* came to predominate among the Sunnīs, with philosophers like Ibn Khaldūn choosing to suspend reason, concluding that "The intellect should not be used to weigh such matters as...the real character of divine attributes" for "it cannot comprehend God and His attributes" (Wolfson 589). The Muslim mystics, however, had another approach, differentiating between the signifier and the signified, distinguishing between the divine names and the Divine Reality. As

Beneito explains,

El nombre es lo Nombrado si por nombres se entienden los Nombres primordiales; mas no es lo Nombrado si por nombres se entienden los nombres de los Nombres-es decir, los nombres de aquellos Nombres primordiales-, que son los nombres generalmente conocidos, compuestos de letras y sonidos. (xv)

[The name is the Named if by names we mean the Primordial Names. However, the name is not the Named if by names we mean the names of the Names, namely, the names of those Primordial Names which are those which are generally known and which are comprised of letters and sounds.]

The divine names that we know, the ones we have in writing, are not really the names of the Names. Everything which exists in symbols or signs is merely references to the Real Names, and indication of the Primordial Divine Word (278). Or, in the words of Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240), as found in volume two of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, “The names are for definition [*al-ta’rīf*] and specification [*al-tamyīz*]. They are a gate to which only God has access for only God knows God” (69). Hence, the names which appear in the Qur’ān apply to that which is “other than Allāh.¹⁶” This is why the Ṣūfīs say that it is the tongue that mentions Allāh, but it is only the heart that understands it (Friedlander 15). Since Allāh represents the Divine Essence and the Divine Essence is utterly incomprehensible, “The God of Islām remains hidden beneath an accumulation of beautiful names” (Böwering 249). To be precise, it is the Essence of Allāh which is occulted, but His Reality is manifested.¹⁷

Another contentious issue among Muslim philosophers is whether the ninety-names of Allāh are equal or whether they form a hierarchy. According to the *ḥanafī* thought, all of the divine names are equal: whoever uses one of them is invoking Allāh (De la Torre 22). According to *ash‘arī* thought, a certain hierarchy exists in which the name Allāh is above them all (22). This is the same idea found among the Ṣūfīs. As Ghazālī (d. 1111) explains in *The Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God*, “You should know that this name is the greatest of the ninety-nine names of God--great and glorious--because it refers to the Essence which unites

all the attributes of divinity” (51). Or, as Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240), states “The omnicomprehensive name *Allāh* relates to the Essence. It embraces all of the divine names. It is a totalizing term, the ‘synonym’ of every divine name, in that they relate to the Essence and not in the sense that they are distinct names” (33). It is among this latter group, those who uphold the hierarchy of the divine names, that we find the belief in the supreme name [*al-ism al-a‘ẓam*] of Allāh, occult and unrevealed.¹⁸

The idea of a mysterious supreme name [*al-ism al-a‘ẓam*], which assures the fulfillment of one’s prayers, is very widespread among both Sunnīs and Shī‘ites. The Prophet Muḥammad explained that the supreme name is the one “by which if He is called upon, He responds; and if He is asked, He grants” (Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah). While the notion of the supreme name is based on some *aḥādīth* [traditions], it also derives from an interpretation of the Qur’ānic verse *fa sabbiḥ bismi rabbika al-‘aẓīmi*, which can be translated in one of two ways: “Then celebrate with praises the name of thy Lord, the Supreme!” (56:74; 56:96; 69:52) or “Then celebrate with praises the supreme name of your Lord” (56:74; 56:96; 69:52). Yūsuf ‘Alī translates the verse the first way and Muḥammad Aṣad follows the sense of the second, translating it as “Extol, then, the limitless glory of thy Sustainer’s mighty name!” (56:74; 56:96; 69:52). While some scholars deny that the verse can be interpreted in this way, others hold that the adjective “supreme” [‘*aẓīm*] qualifies the noun “Lord.”

Although the existence of a supreme name is not corroborated by the traditions compiled by Bukhārī (d. 870) or Muslim (d. 875), it is found in the equally meticulous collections of *ḥadīth* prepared by Abū Dāwūd (d. 817) and Tirmidhī (d. 892), where the Prophet speaks of the supreme name, without designating it explicitly. In the *aḥādīth* [traditions] in question, the Prophet Muḥammad limits himself to leaving clues regarding the supreme name. He contents himself with saying that the supreme name is to be found in a series of words or expressions, leaving Muslims to attempt to decipher it on their own. For many Muslims, the secret of the sublime name is to be found in the ninety-nine names of Allāh.

According to Ṭabarī (d. 923), Imām Mālik (d. 795), Ibn Ḥibbān, al-Ashʿarī (d. 935?), and al-Bāqillānī (d. 1013), who are representatives of the intellectual tradition, and al-Junayd and Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī, who are representative of the spiritual tradition, the supreme name does not have a determined form per se.¹⁹ As far as al-Junayd was concerned, whenever a person invokes Allāh with a heart detached from this world, he pronounces the supreme name. According to Imām al-Murtadā (d. 1437), however, all the names of Allāh were equal in rank and dignity, and each one of them was the supreme name. To support his claim, al-Murtadā used to recite the following verse from the Qurʾān: “By whatever name ye call upon Him, to Him belong the most beautiful names (17:110). This was also the opinion of Ṭabarsī (d. 1153) who said that all of the names of Allāh are supreme.

According to a *ḥadīth* [a prophetic tradition or saying], the supreme name [*al-ism al-aʿzam*], must essentially be sought in Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (112). The tradition relates that a man prayed to Allāh saying: “O Allāh, I pray to you testifying that you are Allāh, and there is no Truth but You, the One, the Unique, and the Impregnable. You have not begotten nor were you begotten, and there is none equal unto You.” Upon hearing him, the Prophet Muḥammad proclaimed: “By Him in whose hands is my soul, he has addressed Allāh with the supreme name” (Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, and Ibn Mājah). In another *ḥadīth*, the Prophet Muḥammad was asked about the supreme name and said that it was to be found in the Qurʾān in Sūrat al-Baqarah: “And your God is One God; there is no god save Him, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful” (2:163) and in Sūrat āl-ʿImrān [The Family of ʿImrān] “*Alif. Lam. Mīm.* Allāh! There is no god save Him, the Alive, the Eternal” (3:1-2) (Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah). According to some theosophical speculation, the supreme name of Allāh might be: *Hu* or *Huwa* [He], perhaps even *Yā Huwa* [O He], supposing a link with the Hebrew *Yahweh*,²⁰ *al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm* [the Living, the Everlasting]; *Dhū al-Jalāl wa al-Ikrām* [the Lord of Majesty and Bounty]; or that it can be found in the “isolated letters” at the beginning of several Qurʾānic chapters.

Regardless of the existence or identity of the supreme name, Muslim thinkers are in agreement that Allāh can only be known by means of His divine names, each one representing a symbol or sign of the Almighty. As the Qur’ān repeatedly teaches, all the things in the cosmos are *āyāt Allāh*, the signs of Allāh, which means that everything bears witness to the presence and reality of the Divine. In fact, the holy book of Islām employs the term “sign” in singular and plural form 288 times in several closely related senses (Murata 24). As Sachiko Murata says, “All the qualities found in inanimate objects, plants, animals, and humans, have their roots in the divine names” (237). In Islām, all things [*ashyā*] or entities [*a’yān*] are manifestations [*tajalliyāt*] of the divine names [*asmā’ Allāh*], attributes and qualities [*ṣifāt*], since they all derive their existence and reason for being from the One and Unique Existent. As Murata explains, “God is invisible by definition. Yet, traces and intimations of His awesome reality can be gleaned from all things, if only we meditate upon them” (24). Or, as we read in the Qur’ān, “There is not a thing but celebrates His praise; and yet ye understand not how they declare His glory!” (17:44). Through the use of the ninety-nine names of Allāh, Muslims acknowledge the signs of Allāh which surround them, and declare His Glory in perpetual praise. The most beautiful names are not only a profession of faith, they are a procession, stepping stones along the path of spiritual perfection, leading to the state of sublime submission, union with Allāh, as embodied by the Complete Human Being [*al-insān al-kāmil*], the universal synthesis of the divine names.

4. The Complete Human Being:

The Universal Synthesis of the Divine Names²¹

According to a famous *ḥadīth qudsī* or sacred saying, Almighty Allāh says: “I was a Hidden Treasure [*kanz makhfī*], and I wished to be known. So, I created humankind, then I revealed myself to them, and they recognized me.”²² In some Ṣūfī versions of this saying, Allāh not only reveals the reason for creation, but also the role of the created, saying:

I was a Hidden Treasure that desired to be known. So I manifested all the creation to reveal the essence of the deep secret: knowledge of myself. He whom I created to reveal the treasure carries within himself this treasure but he must explode the mountain of his existence to discover the treasure which is hidden within it. (<http://www.sufimaster.org/teachings/secretlove.htm>)

As Almighty Allāh says in the Holy Qur'ān, "I created the *jinn* and humankind only that they might worship Me" (51:56). According to the Prophet's companion, Ibn 'Abbās, the verb "to worship" in this context, is to be understood in the sense of "to know" (Murata 26; Ibn al-'Arabī, 2002: 131). The purpose of creation is inseparable from the concept of divine love. However, since human beings cannot know or love their Creator as an inconceivable transcendent Essence, Allāh revealed His most beautiful names so that he could be invoked and remembered (Beneito v). In the words of Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240), "He brought the world into existence to make manifest the authority of the Names" (2002: 37). As Beneito explains,

Por Su amor su Compasión, Allāh--"Oculto" en tanto a su Esencia incognoscible-se epifaniza en el cosmos, en el hombre y en el Libro revelado, lugares de Su manifestación, dándose a conocer al ser humano en tanto que "Manifiesto." Sus nombres-que Ibn 'Arabī considera 'relaciones' [*nisab*]-permiten al hombre llegar a conocerle en Su similaridad y tener concocimiento de Su incomparabilidad, conciliando immanencia y trascendencia en una vía intermedia consistente en la reunión de los opuestos. (v)

[Through His Love and Compassion, Allāh--"Hidden" with regards to His Essence--epiphanates Himself in the cosmos, in human beings, and in the revealed Book, all places of His manifestation, through which he makes Himself "Manifest" to humankind. His names--which Ibn al-'Arabī considers as 'relations' [*nisab*]-allow humankind to know Him through His similarity and to have knowledge of His incomparability, reconciling immanence and transcendence through a middle path which consists in the union of opposites.]

The most beautiful names are the means through which Allāh reveals the manifestations of His names throughout the cosmos (vi). They are the means of

reaching Him, and the response to His command: “Call upon Me and I will answer you” (40:60). As a result, belief in God is not in itself enough. As ‘Alī Muḥammad Naqṣī explains,

A person must know the attributes of God, because it is the knowledge of the attributes of God which enables man to cultivate in himself the noblest of human qualities...The knowledge of God’s attributes purifies man’s mind and soul, his beliefs and actions, but mere intellectual knowledge of God’s attributes is not sufficient. We must have an unflinching conviction, firmly rooted in our minds and hearts, so that we may remain immune from doubt and immoral action. If we have conviction that God is our Lord, that He oversees everything, then we may not commit a sin even at a place where there is no one to check us.²³ (Naqṣī 3-4)

Knowledge of Allāh is knowledge of the divine names. Knowledge of the divine names is knowledge of self, and the divine nature which lies latent in all human beings.

According to a well-known *ḥadīth* [tradition] from the Prophet Muḥammad, “Allāh created Adam in His Own image” [*inna Allāha khalaqa Adama ‘alā ṣūratihī*].²⁴ According to Islāmic thought, this tradition indicates that the primordial nature [*fiṭrah*] of man is the epitome or universal synthesis of the Divine Essence in its earthly and spiritual manifestations.²⁵ As Ghazalī explains in *Mishkāt al-anwār*,

Allāh, out of His grace and mercy gave to Adam a summary “image” or “form,” embracing every genus and species in the whole world, inasmuch that it was as if Adam were all that was in the world, or was the summarized copy of the world. And Adam’s form--this summarized “image”--was inscribed in the handwriting of Allāh, so that Adam is the Divine Word. (135)

Adam, as the Archetype of Man, embodies the Divine Presence and the divine names. As the Qur’ān says, “He taught Adam the names, all of them” (2:31).

In Islām, in general, the goal of the believer is to conform to the character of the Prophet Muḥammad, the greatest model of *al-takhalluq bi asmā’ Allāh* or assuming the attributes of Allāh, in which the qualities of the divine names

manifest themselves in harmony (Beneito 310). As Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) says, “No one has realized this station [of servitude] to its perfection like the Messenger of Allāh” (2002: 131). In Ṣūfī thought, each step that the Prophet took during his ascension into Heaven represented one of the divine names he had embodied. Besides the Messenger of Allāh, the Imāms, in Shī‘ism, who are known as *ḥujjāt Allāh* or Proofs of Allāh, and the *aqṭāb* or Poles in Ṣūfism, are also sources of emulation [*marāji‘ al-taqlīd*].²⁶ The goal of every believer is to literally become a *muslim*, one who surrenders completely and absolutely to Allāh, actualizing the divine names which exist with them as virtualities. This was clearly conveyed in the Prophet’s words “Assume the character traits of Allāh” (Ibn al-‘Arabī, 2002: 308, note 122) and the *ḥadīth qudsī* in which Allāh says, “My earth does not encompass Me, nor does My heaven, but the heart of My servant, the person of true faith, does encompass Me” (315, note 7; 323, note 37). In other words, all of Allāh, all of His Attributes, can fit in the heart and soul of a “Complete Human Being.”

In Islām, a “Complete Human Being” is one who has reached the highest psychological, physical, and spiritual stage of being.²⁷ This Perfect Person is like a sun around which the divine attributes revolve. Although the stages differ between different Ṣūfī orders, they may include: the aspirant, the novice, the wanderer, the knower, the guide, the saint and, finally, the complete human being or perfect person. The “Complete Human Being” is the one who has effaced his ego, become selfless, abandoned his individual identity, erased his “I,” and reached a state of union with the Supreme Identity. Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) uses the Arabic term *muwaḥḥid* to designate the perfect spiritual union in which the believer loses himself in Divine Unity. It is the state in which the knower and the known are erased which is known as *fanā’ al-fānī* [annihilation of the annihilated].²⁸ The person who reaches the state of *muwaḥḥid* sees the Divine Unity in everything and does not associate or attribute anything inappropriate with it. Almighty Allāh, in a famous *ḥadīth qudsī*, describes the absolute surrender of a divine servant in the following terms: “When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which

he strikes and his foot with which he walks” (Bukhārī).

According to Islāmic thought, “Perfect People” are those who have fully submitted, who have become at one with the Divine, like the great spiritual guides, the Prophets in particular, the Twelve Imāms--among Shī‘ite Gnostics--and the “Poles” [*aqṭāb*]--among Sunnīs Gnostic--namely, the *awliyā’ Allāh* [the Saints or Friends of Allāh].²⁹ For Shī‘ite Muslims, the Fourteen Infallibles embody the divine attributes. It is for this reason that the Imāms proclaimed: “We are the most beautiful names” (Kulaynī). For Shī‘ites, the Imām is the *khalīfat Allāh* [the representative or vicar of the Divinity], the pillar of the divine names, namely, the manifestation of the divine attributes and qualities through which the Supreme Principle or the Universal Possibility make Himself know to His creatures. The Imām is the supreme mediator [*wasīlah kubrā*], synthesis of the divine attributes and qualities through which the Divinity is known by the creatures and through which the Divinity knows its creatures. The Imām is the one who has “become the Reality” [*al-mutaḥaqqiq bi al-Ḥaqq*], namely, the one who, by perfecting himself, has fully manifested the totality of the divine attributes through the perfection of human attributes or moral virtues [*khuluq*], reaching the state of identification with His Celestial Model, the Complete Human Being [*al-insān al-kāmil*], the first creation, who has transformed into his own image of human form on earth. His limbs, acts and words are epiphanies [*mazār*] of the Absolute. For Ṣūfī Muslims, each Muḥammadan Pole has a *ḥijjīr* or “constant invocation” specific to himself. The *ḥijjīr* of the greatest Poles is the name Allāh. This explains why the supreme Pole forever pertains to this name and is called ‘Abd Allāh. The constant invocations of the other Poles include well-known formulae that are used in prayer and invocation, including *lā ilahā illā Allāh* [There is no god but Allāh], *Allāhu Akbar* [Allāh is the Greatest], *subḥāna Allāh* [Glory be to Allāh], *alḥamdulillāh* [Praise be to Allāh], the most common phrases from the Allāh Lexicon, as well as various Qur’ānic verses.

On a more earthly as opposed to ethereal level, many Muslims have a favourite divine name and Allāh expression, just like they have a preferred chapter or verse from the Qur’ān. When Muslims give their children names of

servitude like ‘Abd Allāh, they want their children to live up to them, to embody them, in the same way that divine names are actualized by the Friends of Allāh. They do so in accordance with the words of the Prophet: “On the Day of Judgment you will be called by your names and your fathers’ names, so choose beautiful names [for your children]” (Abū Dāwūd). As Earl H. Waugh has observed, “This care about names has perhaps developed from the sensitivity to God’s beautiful names in the Qur’ān (17:110), and the great piety with which the ninety-nine names of God are recited” (224). When it comes to selecting names for one’s offspring, the Messenger of Allāh has said that “The names dearest to Allāh are ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān” (Abū Dāwūd). Parents who name their son ‘Abd al-Halīm, the Servant of the Gentle One, want him to be gentle; those who name their son ‘Abd al-‘Alīm or ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm, want him to be wise; and those who name their sons ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, want him to be compassionate. While each human being embodies the divine attributes, and often one in particular, many Muslims are actually named with the divine names.³⁰

According to Islāmic thought, the Great or Complete Human Being [*al-insān al-kabīr* or *al-insān al-kāmil*], is the universal synthesis of the divine names and attributes. As Muslim Gnostics say, the universe is a Great Man, and man is a Small Universe [*al-kawnu insānun kabīrun wa al-insānu kawnun ṣaghīr*] (Murata 23). In fact, the Complete Human Being [*al-insān al-kāmil*] is the universal archetype in whose image was created the *humanized human* or *small man* [*al-insān al-ṣaghīr*], the “Son of Adam” [*ibn Adam*] in whom Allāh placed all of the realities [*ḥaqā’iq*] of the macrocosmos [*al-‘ālam al-kabīr*], in such a way that man, despite the size of his body, represents the entire universe. The “Complete Human Being” is the universal synthesis of existence which embodies the virtual potentiality of all forms of being [*al-wujūd*], through both divine and human attributes. As Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) explains, “[T]here is no name that God has applied to Himself that He has not also applied to us” (2002: 214). It is by means of these attributes that Allāh brings Himself close to His creatures and gives them the opportunity to approach His Essence (De la Torre 24). As Friedlander explains, “The names of Allāh are connected with the life of man. All aspects of

life can be seen in the names” (10). As such, there is a name of God for every human trait (De la Torre 25). This is why the Prophet Muḥammad is quoted as saying: “He who knows himself, knows his Lord.”³¹ In other words, the attributes of Allāh are to be found in souls, the receptacles [*qawābil*] or place of manifestation of the Divine Presence.³² As Beneito explains,

El hombre tiene la posibilidad, según su predisposición y su receptividad, de adoptar las cualidades de los diversos nombres de Uno-Múltiple reintegrándolos-por medio de su concentración, su aspiración espiritual y la comprensividad de su corazón-en su Unidad esencial...Resulta fundamental comprender que la adopción de las cualidades de los nombres no implica apropiación. El hombre es receptáculo, “lugar” donde se manifiestan los efectos de los hombres, partícipe de los atributos con los cuales, por la gracia de la divina providencia, se reviste en tanto que siervo adorador de Dios. (vi)

[Human beings have the possibility, depending on their predisposition and receptivity, to adopt the qualities of the various names of the One and the Multiple, reintegrating them by means of his concentration, spiritual aspiration and breadth of his heart, in their essential Unity...It is essential to understand that the adoption of the qualities of the names does not imply appropriation. Human beings are the receptacle, the “place” in which the human attributes are manifested. Human beings participate in the attributes by which, through the grace of divine providence, they adorn themselves as faithful servants of God.]

Human beings, by nature, possess all the possibilities of perfection³³. As a result, they have been placed in a central or axiomatic position in the universe. As Beneito explains,

El siervo...no es sólo un hombre o mujer cualquiera en tanto que persona común o individuo creyente y practicante, sino el ser humano por excelencia, el Hombre Perfecto, creado según la forma de Dios, en su dimensión de síntesis microcósmica y en su función de Polo o Eje del universo. Sin el Hombre Perfecto el cosmos sería aniquilado. (95 nota 1)

[The servant...is not a mere man or woman, a common person or individual believer...but rather the human being *par excellence*, the Complete Human Being, created in the image of God, as a microcosmic synthesis and Pole or Axis of the Universe. Without a Complete Human Being, the cosmos would be annihilated.]

To become a “saint,” from an Islāmic point of view, is to fully realize all the possibilities of the human condition, uniting with the universal human prototype, “The Complete Human Being.”³⁴ From the perspective of *taṣawwuf* [Sūfism] and ‘*irfān shī‘ī*’ [Shī‘ite mysticism], spiritual realization [*al-taḥaqquq al-rūḥānī*] consists in assuming each divine attribute step by step, eventually reaching union with the Divine [*Allāh*] and the cosmos which is the representation of the “Complete Human Being,” the mirror which reflects the highest grade of purity and simplicity of all the divine names. The entire process is one of unveiling. As the Prophet said, “Allāh has seventy or seventy thousand veils of light and darkness” (Majlisī qtd. in Chittick, 1989: 264, note 49, and Ghazalī, 1952: 76-77). The quest of each Muslim is to remove veils of darkness and veils of light. According to Nicholson, these light-veils correspond to various degrees of saintship (78). As Ghazalī explains, the first step along this path of spiritual purification is the understanding of the true meaning of the divine attributes (1952: 169). The adoption of divine names, Islām’s ninety-nine point plan for human perfection, culminates in the creation of the “Complete Human Being,” also known as ‘Abd al-Ṣamad, the Servant of the Eternal Universal Pillar, who serves as the place of manifestation of the divine names (246).

According to Sūfī thought, the Complete Human Being, who shares the original nature of Adam and the Muḥammadan Reality [*al-ḥaqīqah al-muḥammadiyyah*], is the microcosmic synthesis of creation, the mirror in which the Divine Reality contemplates Himself, and the pupil through which He sees (Beneito v). As is often stated in Islāmic mysticism, the Divine contemplates Himself and everything which He [*hu*] has achieved in the cosmos by means of the “Complete Human Being.” As Beneito explains,

Cuando...adquiere el ser humano...el carácter divino y, calificándose con las más nobles cualidades, se convierte en el lugar de la mirada de Dios desde el cosmos...la presencia de la manifestación de...los Nombres de Dios” (243-44)

[When a human being develops a divine character, adorning himself with the most noble qualities, he becomes the gaze of God from the cosmos...the presence of the manifestation of the names of God].

It is for this reason that the “Complete Human Being” is known as the “Sole Prototype,” the “Evident Prototype” which is spoken of in the Qur’ān. In fact, it is the Universal Being which differentiates itself in successive polarizations, as active and passive, as species and individual, as male and female, as macrocosmos and microcosmos, as universe and man. Each of these elements has their opposite in the plan of ontological perfection.

As the names of Allāh are limitless, so are the ways to Allāh. It is for this reason that the Prophet said that “The numbers of paths to God is equal to the number of human souls” (Chittick, 1989: 52, Note 1) and it is why Yahyā or John the Baptist told Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) in the Fifth Heaven that “Each person has a path, that no one else but he travels...paths that come through the traveling itself” (2002: 223). Each person has a path, each path is a divine name, and each path starts with the most beautiful names, the source of the Allāh Lexicon, and a ninety-eight step plan for human perfection.

One Muslim, for example, may adopt the attribute *al-Shāhid*, the Witness, the Contemplator and, by extension, become *al-Shahīd*, the Martyr, the one who offers his life as a witness to Eternal Truth. The Witness or *Shāhid* is one who sees, not with his external eyes, but with the internal eyes of his heart. The prime example of the Witness or the Martyr in Islām is the moving example of Imām al-Ḥusayn (d. 680), the youngest son of ‘Alī ibn Abū Ṭalib (d. 661), who was martyred in Karbala along with most of his family members and companions. Another Muslim, a woman this time, may simultaneously embody the divine attributes *al-Jamāl*, the Beautiful, and *al-Bāṭin*, the Veiled. Since beauty is a feminine attribute, a Muslim woman is a manifestation of divine beauty [*jamāl Allāh*]. When a Muslim sees the beautiful face of a woman, he is contemplating the beauty of the Divine. As the famous *ḥadīth* says, “Allāh is Beautiful and love beauty” (Bukhārī). While Allāh is Beautiful, He also hides His Beauty behind the Veil [*hijāb*] as divine beauty can only be contemplated by those who are pure of

heart, the saints, the *awliyā'* or "Friends of Allāh." Likewise, a Muslim woman's beauty can only be admired by her direct relatives [*maḥram*].³⁵ Like the martyr who adopts the attribute *al-Shahīd*, and the Muslim woman who adopts the attributes of *al-Jamāl* and *al-Bāṭin*, the Gnostic adopts the attribute of *al-ʿĀrif*, the scholar the attribute of *al-Hakīm*, the philosopher and the jurist the attribute of *al-ʿAlīm*, all assuming different attributes of Allāh and witnessing to the presence of the Divine. It is only the Friends of Allāh who can adopt all the divine names, a state described by Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240) as follows:

[W]hen a servant...knows that he is not [created] according to the form of the world, but only according to the form of God [*al-Haqq*], then God "makes him journey" through His Names, "in order to cause him to see His Signs" (17:1) within him. Thus [the servant] comes to know that He is what is designated by every divine Name---whether or not that Name is one of those described as "beautiful." It is through those Names that God appears in His servants, and it is through Them that the servant takes on the different "colorings" of his states: for They are Names of God, but "colorings" [of the soul] in us. (2002: 213).

By adopting the attributes of Allāh, one does not mean that the believer becomes Allāh. As al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) warned:

when one sloughs off the passions of his soul with its desires and concerns, no room remains in him for anything other than God, nor will he have any concern other than God...So if nothing exists in his heart but the majesty of God and His beauty, so that he becomes immersed in it, he does become as though he were He, but not so that he actually is God... But here lies a pitfall, for if one does not have a firm footing in things rational, he may fail to distinguish one of them from the other, and looking upon the perfection of his essence and how it may be adorned with the finery of truth which shines in it, he will think that he is He [God], and will say 'I am the Truth.' (153)

The fact that believers acquire one of the characteristics of the Divine Essence does not mean that they become Allāh, since Allāh is the synthesis of all the divine names, and the Muslim can only aspire to adopt one, some, or all of them, through their mention. In other words, everything in the human being manifests Allāh's names and attributes, while the individual human being as a whole---at

least in the case of those who are fully human and have become Allāh's viceregents--manifests all Allāh's names (Murata 37).

5. Conclusions

As we have seen in the previous pages, the name *Allāh*, despite its high rate of frequency in the Arabic language, has been particularly polemical with regards to its etymological origin. Although some hold that it is *jāmid*, without derivation, a proper noun reserved from the Divinity, or that it is derived from another Semitic language, most linguists believe it to be derived from *al-ilāh*. If the name *Allāh*, which refers to the Essence, does not have a precise meaning, and cannot be comprehended, the most beautiful names, on the contrary, are divinely donned descriptions and the only means of understanding the Divinity. Ninety-nine in number, the most beautiful names are eloquent expressions of the multiplicity within the Divinity, the conceptual core of the Qur'ān, and the foundational framework of Islāmic philosophy which finds its peak in the universal archetype of the Complete Human Being who, by reaching the state of sublime submission, has become the microcosmic manifestation of all the divine names, the very Word of Allāh, and the embodiment of the Allāh Lexicon.

End Notes

¹ Editor's Note: In fact, so much has been written about the the *asmā' al-ḥusnā* that they represent a literary genre. The early philological treatises dealing with the divine names include those of the two al-Zajjāj (d. 923; d. 949), the lost treatises of al-Mubarrad (d. 898), as well as the works of Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 915), and Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 934). After these seminal works follow the great treatises influenced by Ash'arī thought, such as the *Tafsīr asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), the *Kitāb al-asmā' wa al-ṣifāt* of Abū Bakr al-Bayhaqī (d. 1066), and the *al-Taḥbīr fī al-tadhkīr* of al-Qushayrī (d. 1072). Two of the most important treatises include *al-Maqṣad al-asnā'* of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), the *Lawāmi al-bayyināt* of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), and the equally important *Sharḥ asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā* of Ibn Barrajān (d. 1141) without forgetting Ibn al-'Arabī's (d. 1240) *Kitāb kashf al-ma'nā 'ann sirr asmā' Allāh al-ḥusnā*. There is also a large body of representative works which deal, in part, with the divine names, including: Abū Ḥātim's (d. 934?) *Zīna*, Ash'arī's (d. 931?) *Maqālāt*, Halīmī's (d. 1012) *Minhāj*, Ibn Furak's (d. 1015) *Mujarrad*, 'Abd al-Jabbār's (d. 1025) *Mughnī*, Abū Ya'lā's (d. 1066) *Mu'tamad*, Juwaynī's (d. 1085) *Irshād*, Ijī's (1355?) *Mawāqif*, among many more. Most of these works were written by philologists and specialists in *kalām* [scholastic philosophy]. However, a large body of commentaries on the divine names was written by Muslim mystics. Considering their importance in Islāmic thought, it is remarkable that Western scholars have paid such little attention to the divine names (Murata 7).

² Editor's Note: Ninety-nine is also a topological number to indicate incompleteness, i.e. Allāh has one majestic hidden name.

³ Author's Note: For more on the image of the road, in its multiple manifestations as path, route, way, highway, pass, and bridge, in Islām, see John Morrow's "The Image of the Road in Arabic-Islāmic Literature, Language and Culture."

⁴ Author's Note: The etymological information on the word *Allāh* and *ilāh* is a composite of material drawn from Rāzī (d. 1210), Jubbā'ī (d. 915), Zamakhsharī (d. 1144), Gibb, al-Nassir, Mosel, Owens, and Carter.

⁵ Author's Note: The search for the origin of the word *Allāh* has focused on two main issues: on the one hand, determining the origin of the word--namely, figuring out whether it was formed through certain internal mechanism--and, on the other, establishing those morphological mechanisms to explain how the word developed, from which elements it is composed, and what relationship they have between themselves. Arabic linguists were concerned with the lexical morphology of the new word. They were interested in determining whether it had a specific sense or meaning [*dalālah*] and whether it belonged to the category of proper nouns [*asmā' al-a'lām*]. If it was indeed a proper noun, they wanted to establish whether it was coined [*mawḍū'*] to designate the Transcendental Being or whether it was derived [*mushtaqq*] etymologically [*ishtiqāq*]. In the event that it developed etymologically, they wanted to determine whether it derived from a natural root or whether its root was substituted by means of ankylosis.

⁶ Author's Note: For more on this subject, see: al-Farrā's (d. 822-3) *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, Sībawayhi's *Kitāb*, and Zamakhsharī's (d. 1144) *al-Mufaṣṣalū fī 'ilm al-lughah*. As a secondary source, Baalbaki's "The Book in the Grammatical Tradition," in Atiyeh's *The Book in the Islāmic World*, can also be useful.

⁷ Author's Note: While there was no consensus on the matter, the majority of scholars upheld the theory of derivation [*ishtiqāq*], despite the fact that they could not agree upon its etymology. According to Rāzī (d. 1210) and Bayḍawī (d. 1296), eight derivations for *ilāh* [god] were suggested. Abū Ḥāshim gave *ilāh* the sense of "one who is worshipped," supposing a derivation from *āliha* which means "to adore" or "to worship" under a form equivalent to '*ʿabada-yāʿbud*'. This etymology would be consistent with paradigm *fiʿāl* [-i-ā-] where *ilāh* acquires the passive sense of *maʿūl* with *ilāh* being synonymous with *mālūh*, *maʿbūd*, or "adored." The similarity between *taʿāllaha* and *taʿābbada* or "devote oneself to worship" has been stressed by those who support this etymology. Those who supported the stance taken by al-Jubbāʾī (d. 933) argued that the pagan Arabs from *al-jāhiliyyah* [The Days of Ignorance] called their idols *ālihah* because they considered them worthy of worship. In his *Mishkāṭ al-anwār*, al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) suggest that *lh* (god) comes from the root w-l-y or "to turn" since all faces are "directed" in worship towards the Deity (112). Other etymologies included *al-lah*, the infinitive of l-y-h, "to be high," or "to be veiled."

Having generally agreed that *Allāh* was derived from *ilāh*, Arabic linguists tackled two questions: firstly, how does *Allāh* derive from *ilāh*? In other words, how did the ancient word *ilāh* evolve into a new word like *Allāh*? Secondly, what is the root of *ilāh* and what did it mean? The most widely held hypothesis is that *Allāh* is a name of majesty which expresses veneration [*taʿzīm*, *tafkhīm*]. According to this hypothesis, the word *Allāh* was used to distinguish between the True Divinity and other deities. Rather than saying *ilāh* or "god," the prefix *al-* or "the" was added to make it definite, to specify "the God" or *al-ilāh*. Arabic linguists theorized that, due to its constant use in the colloquial language, the interconsonantal /i/ of *al-ilāh* was dropped, creating the proper noun *al-lāh* or *Allāh*, a process known in Arabic linguistics as *takhḥīf* [lightening], the equivalent of the law of least effort. The ambiguous *ilāh* was thus supplanted by the new form *Allāh*, which was infused with vitality and precision.

The change from *al-ilāh* to *Allāh* was explained phonetically in two different ways. According to the first explanation, the *hamzah*, the vowel /i/, disappeared as an independent sound to become the vowel of the previous *lam* /l/ *ālilāh*. As a result, the first *lam* /l/ lost its vowel, becoming "mute." In other words, the initial *lam* /l/, having lost its phonetic function, was assimilated into the second *lam* /l/ to form *Allāh*. The second explanation, which is the most simple, does not accept the intermediate stage of vocalization of the first *lam* /l/. It holds that the *hamza* was dropped and the *lam* /l/ from the unvocalized article *al-* came into contract with the *lam* /l/ from the word *ilāh*. As a result of this transformation, the old medial *hamza* was subjected to the process of assimilation by which the first *hamzah* lost its sound, and the second *lam* /l/ was pronounced more intensely in the absence of any other vowel. This would explain why the second *lam* /l/ bears a *tashdīd*, an auxiliary grapheme for duplication. Each of these two hypotheses was further elaborated upon by subsequent grammarians who added arguments for or against them.

⁸ Author's Note: It is often said that Arabic developed from Nabatean on the basis of inscriptions dating to the fourth century A.D. because, like Arabic, the Nabatean script is consonantic and is written from right to left. On the basis of Nabatean inscriptions, the language appears to have originated around the first and fourth centuries A.D. The majority of the inscriptions come from Petra in Jordan, Mada'in Sālīh in Saudi Arabia and from southern Syria, although some of them come from Rome where the Nabateans has established a commercial colony. Many of the inscriptions are from mortuaries. One funeral text dates from 328 A.D. and was found in Namara, Harran, and mentions "Imurulqais, son of Amru, the king of the Arabs." Although the text employs Nabatean characters, the language is Arabic. Nabatean, as we know, is the formal form of Aramaic. Its variants employed various types of script: Hebrew, Palmyrene, Hatran, Mandaean, and Syriac. It is known that by the end of the eighth century B.C., the government officials of Judah spoke Aramaic (2 Kings 18:26 and Isaiah 36:11).

An analysis of the word "Hebrew," for example, may lead to another conclusion regarding the age of the Arabic language. According to some Biblical scholars, the word Hebrew [*'ibri*], used by Abraham [*Ibrāhīm*] and his descendants, is derived from Heber [*'eber*], son of Shelah and grandson of Shem, ancestor of Abraham [*Ibrāhīm*], which means "one who immigrates" [*habiru*]. According to Max L. Margolis and Alexander Marx's *Historia del pueblo judio*, the Hebrew term [*'ibri, Ibrim*] may be a metathesis of *'arabī* [Arab] (vol. 24, serie 1945, I, 3-13) and is related with the Akkadian term *habiru* / *'apiru* which can be compared with the Ugaritic *'prm* and the Egyptian *'pr*. Both *'ibri* and *'eber*, as well as *'arabī*, designate the inhabitants of the desert, Semitic-speaking nomadic Bedouins, who were constantly traveling from place to place, a point also made by Osvald Loretz in "*Habiru / Hebräer: Eine sozio/linguistische Studie über die Herkunft des gentilicium 'ibri vom appellativum habiru.*" If this is correct, Arabic is much older than philologists and linguists have speculated since their attempts to date the language is based on stone inscriptions dating back to the first century A.D.

By the Natufian period of the Mesolithic, approximately 10,000 years ago, nomadic people were already established in Palestine. These nomads clearly represented the prototype of the Oriental race which would give its traits to the present-day Semites. During the same pre-historic period, an indigenous Semitic population was also found in Mesopotamia. Furthermore, since antiquity, semi-nomadic Semites lived along the Syrian-Arabian desert which they took over as full nomads upon the domestication of the camel which took place around 1200 B.C.

The term Hebrew, which refers to the language in which the Old Testament was written, may be more sociological than ethnic or geographical. Ancient Hebrew was one of the Canaanite languages spoken in Palestine. It belongs to a group of flexive languages which span from Mesopotamia to the Mediterranean, from the foothills of Armenia to the southern coast of Arabia. Hebrew belongs to the Semitic family of languages, a term coined by A.L. Schölzer in 1781. In present times, the classification of Semitic languages is object of debate. Despite their own individual characteristics, Semitic languages are closely related, so much so that, even though written records do not contain vowels, it is relatively easy to point out common linguistic traits.

According to both Hebraists and Arabists, the Arabic language has preserved many of the original phonetic elements of ancient Semitic and expresses the essence of the language spoken by the early inhabitants of the desert. It is for this reason that Arabic grammarians have referred to Arabic as the "mother of all languages." It should be pointed out, however, that when Muslim Arabists use the hyperbole "mother of all languages," they are speaking specifically about the Semitic languages and not in a lexicogenetic sense. They are not claiming that Arabic is the mother of all languages nor that Arabic is the mother of all Semitic languages. On the contrary, it is well known since the time of Sibawayhi that Arabic was formed on the basis of pre-existing dialects. The expression "mother of all languages" should be understood in the sense that without Arabic, which has preserved some of the most ancient features of ancient Semitic, it would be difficult to understand other Semitic languages with any depth, a fact readily acknowledged by Hebraists and Arabists.

Attempts to establish links between the different Semitic languages, without considering Arabic, have faced insurmountable obstacles. No Proto-Semitic can be constructed without due consideration of the Arabic language. The difficulty of reconstructing ancient Semitic is accentuated by the fact that the Semites, like other ethnic and linguistic groups, never had a common colloquial. On the contrary, as the earliest Arabic grammarians observed, the Semites spoke various dialects belonging to a common family. Although there was never a universal, national or standard Arabic in pre-Islamic times, Arabic remains an essential element when it comes to understanding and reconstructing ancient Semitic. As is well known, Arabic has been particularly important in the understanding of Hebrew grammar (see A.H. Mutlaq's *al-Harakāt al-lughawīyah fī al-Andalus*.)

The pre-Islāmic literary corpus, which dates between the sixth and eighth centuries A.D., and which was compiled by Arab philologists during the eighth and ninth centuries, demonstrates that classical Arabic was not a uniform language. Arabic linguists, like Sībawayhi (d. 8th c.), spoke of the existence of diverse dialects which were later divided by experts in Semitic philology into the Western zone of the Hijaz and the Eastern zone of Tamīm and other Bedouin tribes, an indication that the language is much older than assumed.

⁹ Editor's Note: Furthermore, such Arabian gods were exported widely to Mesopotamia; cf. Drijvers, H. J. W. *Cults and Beliefs at Edessa* (Leiden, the Netherlands: E.J. Brill, 1980), 146-74.

¹⁰ Author's Note: For Abū 'Alī al-Jubbā'ī (d. 915), see Jabbār's *al-mughnī* (250, II, 21 ss and 253, I, 4) and for his son, Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī (d. 933), in the same book (251, I, 3 and 252, I, 8). For more on the historical development of Arabic grammar, see *Studies in the Grammar of Early Arabic Based on Papyri Datable to before A.H. 300/A.D. 912* by Hopkins

¹¹ Editor's Note: Nonetheless, all these pagan embodiments were leveled into one God, as such this "inadequacy" seems inevitable.

¹² Editor and Author's Note: In Sunnī sources, this tradition is found in Bukhārī (d. 870), Muslim (d. 875), Tirmidhī (d. 892), Ibn Mājah (d. 887), and Hākim (d. 1014). In Šūfī sources, it is found in Ibn 'Atā' Allāh's (d. 1309) *al-Qaṣd al-mujarrad* (2) and Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *al-maṣṣid al-asmā'* (26-27). It is also found in the following Shī'ite sources: Mufīd's (d. 1022) *Awā'il al-maḡālāt fī al-madhāhib wa al-mujtārāt*, Tabriz, Faḍlullāh Zanjānī, 1371: preface; Shaykh al-Saddūq's (d. 991-92) *al-tawhīd* (35; 58-59; 86), and in al-Ṭūsī's (d. 1067?) *al-Tibyān fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān*, among many others. Some of these traditions include a list of names which, according to ḥadīth scholars, is considered a post-prophetic addition, although the ninety-nine names themselves are authentic as they are derived from the Qur'ān. The initial form of the saying, without the divine names, is considered authentic. For an overview ḥadīth literature and science, see 'Abd al-Ra'ūf's "*Ḥadīth Literature: The Development of the Science of Ḥadīth*" in Beeston's *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (271-88).

¹³ Editor's Note: It should be noted that Mazdaism has a tradition of one hundred names for God. So, the uniqueness of Islām is not that it has ninety-nine names for God, but that it has developed an entire theology around them.

¹⁴ Editor's Note: Jewish people typically address God as Elohīm or Adonai. Christians normally employ God, Jesus or Lord. Muslims, however, employ Allāh and His Attributes, allowing for more precision in one's prayers. For example, if one is seeking mercy, one may appeal to *al-Raḥīm*. If one is seeking justice, one may invoke *al-Muntaqim*, the Avenger. If one is in need of divine love, one may invoke the Loving.

¹⁵ Editor's Note: For an excellent exposition of Divine Duality, the yin and yang in Islām, refer to Murata's *The Tao of Islām*, particularly chapter two. Netton, however, does not seem to grasp this notion. In *Allāh Transcendent*, he writes that:

The attributes of the Fārābian God in this book [*The Virtuous City*] are treated in two different ways: negatively and positively. In the first the author attempted to stress the utter transcendence of his God, referring to Him through a variety of negative propositions and statements... In the second mode al-Fārābī emphasized among other things the different facets of perfection of the Deity, while underlining the fact that all His attributes were subsumed in, and not distinct from, His essence (104).

While the author is correct up to this point, he erroneously concludes that, "Taken together, the negative and positive descriptions of the attributes of God in al-Fārābī's work constitute a radical departure in Islāmic thought" (104) when this divine duality is fundamental in both Sūfism and Shī'ism. Among the Shī'ah, for example, the positive and negative attributes of Allāh are taught to children in the most elementary books on religion.

¹⁶ Editor's Note: According to 'ilm al-hurūf or the "science of letters," words are not identical with the idea of things (Dévényi 277).

¹⁷ Editor's Note: In fact, Islām forbids focusing on the Essence. As the Prophet said: "Meditate upon all things, but do not meditate on the Essence of Allāh" (Suyūfī). This saying was echoed by Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (d. 731-32) who said: "Do not talk about the Allāh Himself, since the discussion of Allāh increased nothing except the discussor's own intellectual perplexity" (Kulaynī 235). In another tradition, the Imām said: "Talk about every thing but never talk about the Essence [dhār] of Allāh" (236). Certainly the hiddenness of God is extremely Semitic, and is very much alive in Judaism and Eastern Christian circles as well.

¹⁸ Editor's Note: The supreme name of Allāh was known to Imām 'Alī (d. 661) (Freidlander 8). This is confirmed in Sunnī, Shī'ite and Sūfī sources. To cite a single example, Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765-66) said: "I have [knowledge] of the [greatest] name [of Allāh] which when the Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his Family, used to put it between the Muslims and the polytheists no arrow of the polytheists could reach the Muslims" (Mufid 415-416). According to the Imām, this knowledge was passed down to him directly. As he explains,

My traditions are my father's traditions; my father's traditions are my grandfather's traditions; my grandfather's traditions are the traditions of 'Alī ibn Abū Ṭālib, the Commander of the Faithful; the traditions of 'Alī, the Commander of the Faithful, are the traditions of the Messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his Family; and the traditions of the messenger of Allāh, may Allāh bless him and his Family, are the word of Allāh, the Mighty and High. (Mufid 414)

¹⁹ Author's Note: For Imām Mālik's (d. 795) view see A.R.I. Doi's "The *Muwatta'* of Imām Mālik on the Genesis of the Sharī'a Law: A Western Scholar's Confusion" (27-41), and Muḥammad Guraya's "Historical Background of the Compilation of the *Muwatta'* of Mālik b. Anas" (379-92), as well as his *Origins of Islāmic Jurisprudence*. For Ibn Ḥibbān (d. 965), see his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, his *Ma'rifat al-majrūhīn wa al-ḍu'afā' min al-muḥaddithīn*, and his *Kitāb al-thiqāt*. For al-Ash'arī (d. 931?), see his *Maqālāt*; for al-Junayd (d. 910?), see al-Qushayrī's (d. 1072) *Risalāt al-Qushayriyyah*, al-Sha'rānī's (d. 1565-66) *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, as well as Ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 1201) chapter on al-Junayd in his *Ṣifāt al-ṣafwāh*. For al-Junayd and al-Bisṭāmī (d. 874), see al-Hujvīrī's (d. 1072) *al-Kashf al-maḥjūb*. For al-Bisṭāmī, see Badawī's *Shaṭaḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah* (1:70), as well as al-Sarrāj's (d. 988) *Kitāb al-Luma'* (461). For more on Khalīl (d. 786), see: Wild's *Das Kitāb al-'Ain und die arabische Lexicographie*. For a bibliography of early Arabic grammarians, see al-Zubaydī's (d. 989) *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥawīyyīn al-lughawīyyīn* as well as *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm*, edited and translated by Bayard Dodge.

²⁰ Editor's Note: There are Shī'ite traditions which suggest that the supreme name of Allāh is actually Hebrew, thus reaffirming the supposed link between *Yā Huwa* and *Yahweh*, which may be nothing more than folk etymology. According to Hebrew linguists, the Tetragrammaton is generally assumed to be derived from the verb HWY "to be" or "to become" a causative form with the third person prefix; hence, the initial Y, like the Hebrew *Yihyeh* and the Arabic *Yahyā*, namely, "He who lives." The name *Yahweh* would literally mean "He causes to become." Another tradition, however, regards the name as coming from three different verb forms sharing the same root YWH: HYH *haya* [He was], HWH, *howē* [He is], and YHYH *yihyē* [He will be]. The name *Yahweh* would simultaneously mean "He was / He is / He will be" underlying

the timeless nature of the Eternal One. It could be loosely translated as “He, the Eternal” which would be the equivalent of the Arabic *al-Huwa al-Qayyūm*.

²¹ Editor’s Note: Many of the concepts discussed in this chapter [the perfect person, manifestation...] were not an intrinsic part of early Islām. However, merely because they were not known the early Muslims does not make them un-Islāmic. They are philosophical developments inspired by the Qur’ān and the Sunnah.

²² Editor’s Note: This tradition, which is commonly quoted in Sūfī works, and by Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) in particular, is considered spurious by the traditionists as it does not contain an *isnād* or chain or narration. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, “It is not from the words of the Prophet, and there is no known *isnād* for it: neither *ṣaḥīḥ* [authentic] nor *ḍa‘īf* [weak];” al-Zarkashī (d. 794), Ibn Ḥajar (d. 1449), al-Suyūfī (d. 1505), and others agreed with him. Nonetheless, Ibn al-‘Arabī considers it authentic on the basis of “unveiling” and even the traditionists agree that its meaning is true. As al-Qārī admits, “its meaning is correct, deduced from the statement of Allāh, ‘I created the *jinn* and humankind only that they might worship Me’ (51:56), i.e. to recognise/know me, as Ibn ‘Abbās has explained” (Ḥassan). For the long version of this famous *ḥadīth qudsī*, see Ibn al-‘Arabī’s *Uqlat al-mustawfīz* (48) and Henry Corbin’s *L’Imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d’Ibn ‘Arabī* (98).

²³ Editor’s Note: According to Shī‘ite belief, on the Prophets and Fourteen Ma‘sumīn are infallible. Nonetheless, the term “infallible” is also applied to those falling outside of this category, like Zaynab (d. 682?), the sister of Ḥusayn (d. 680), whom her nephew, Imām Zayn al-‘Abidīn (d. 710?) referred to as an “un-taught scholar” or *‘alimah ghayr mu‘allamah*. The same applies to the sister of Imām al-Riḍā (d. 818-19), Fāṭimah, who was known as al-Ma‘sumah, the infallible one. So a distinction must be made between those who are infallible by divine gift and those who have acquired “infallibility” through piety, knowledge, absolute faith, and knowledge of certainty.

²⁴ Editor’s Note: Although this tradition is considered suspect by traditionists, and condemned outright by the jurists, the representatives of the spiritual tradition in Islām accept it as it epitomizes the metaphysical underpinnings of their position (Murata 333). As Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) remarks, the tradition is “sound on the basis of unveiling [i.e. by mystical vision], but not established by way of transmission” (qtd. Murata 333). Another variant of the tradition says that “Allāh created Adam in the form of the Most Merciful” which, according to Jāmī (d. 1492), is found in *Riwāyat ma‘ānī al-akḥbār* of Muḥammad ibn Ishāq ibn Yāsār. Cf. Jāmī, *Naqd al-nuṣūṣ* 94.

²⁵ Editors’ Note: According to Islām, all human beings have a natural predisposition [*fiṭrah*] to believe in the oneness of God (7:172). According to a *ḥadīth qudsī*, Almighty Allāh said: “I created my servants in the right religion, but the devils made them go astray” (Muslim). The Messenger of Allāh also said that “Each child is born in a state of *fiṭrah*, but his parents make him a Jew or a Christian” (Bukhārī and Muslim). As Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 1240) explains, “Not a single one of His creatures can fail to find Him in its primordial and original nature [*bi fiṭratihi wa jibillatihi*]. So the whole world prays to Him, prostrates itself before Him, and glorifies His praise” (2002: 183). And, of course, “tongues speak of Him” (183), using the Allāh Lexicon.

²⁶ Editor’s Note: Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) refers to the Perfect Person as *al-Muṭā‘*, the Vicegerent, which Massignon identifies with the *Quṭb* or Axis.

²⁷ Author’s Note: For more on the metaphysical aspect of the Perfect Person, see al-Jilī’s (d. 1365-66) *Kitāb al-insān al-kāmil*, translated into French by Titus Burckhardt as *De l’homme universel*. Pages 30-35 and 40-45 of this latter include a commentary on the divine attributes. See,

also, Qashānī's (d. 1330?) *Kitāb* and Alawī's commentaries on the divine name *Allāh* with relation to the *basmalah* in *al-Mināḥu al-quddusiyyah*. Ghazālī's (d. 1111) *Faḍā'ih al-bāṭiniyya*, Lāhijī Fayyaz's (d. 17th c.) *Gawhar-e murād* and Jāmī's (d. 1492) *Nafahāt al-uns* can also be consulted. For the Perfect Person as the universal synthesis of the divine names and attributes in Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 1240), see Chitticks's *The Self-Disclosure of God*, particularly pp. xxiii-xxv, as well chapter six of Titus Burkhardt's *An Introduction to Ṣūfī Doctrine*.

²⁸ Editor's Note: Several prophetic traditions connected the Islāmic concept of enlightenment are cited in Michel Chodkiewicz's critically annotated translation of the *Meccan Revelations*, including: "Whoever dies has already begun his resurrection;" "Not one of you will see his Lord until he dies" (277, note 19) and "Death is before the meeting with God" (281: note 43).

²⁹ Editor's Note: From a strictly Shī'ite point of view, the Prophets, Messengers, and the Fourteen Infallibles may hold a station higher than that of Perfect People. In the *insān al-kāmil*, perfection is acquired through effort. In the case of the Prophets, Messengers, and Fourteen Infallibles, it is divinely gifted.

³⁰ Editor's Note: Just like every Amerindian has a totem, a nahua, an animal characteristic he aims to incarnate, every Muslim, or rather, every human being, regardless of religion, has been given a gift, a divine quality, which needs to be discovered and actualized. According to Ibn al-'Arabī, this is one's divine duty: "Just as He who loves you gave you your creation, so also you should give Him that for which you were created" (2002: 191).

³¹ Editor's Note: According to *ḥadīth* specialists, this is actually a saying of the Ṣūfī Yahyā ibn Mu'adh al-Rāzī which has been wrongly attributed to the Prophet (Ibn al-'Arabī, 2002: 308, note 123, and Massignon 88).

³² Editor's Note: Human beings have a spirit or life-force known as the [*nafs*] which represents animal instincts. They also have a soul [*rūh*] in which divine qualities lay latent. The worst of people may have the spiritual form of animals like donkeys, pigs, and dogs... The best of people are those who have the spiritual form of a true human being (Ibn al-'Arabī 278, note 27). Once, when Imām Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (d. 765-66) was performing the pilgrimage, his companion pointed out that there were many pilgrims. The Imām responded that there were few pilgrims. He then touched the eyes of his companion, allowing him to see the souls of the pilgrims, and saw nothing but beasts circumambulating the Ka'bah.

³³ Editor's Note: This belief is perfectly in line with Abraham Mazlow's concept of self-actualization. As he explains, "Self-actualization is the intrinsic growth of what is already in the organism, or more accurately, of what the organism is." The concept of the Archetype of Adam and the Perfect Person also reflects Islām's position on the nature versus nurture debate. According to the Muslim faith, humans are innately righteous; they are only corrupted by their upbringing and environment. As Mazlow believed, people are basically good, not evil.

³⁴ Editor's Note: Unlike Catholic saints, Muslim *awliyā'* are not canonized, enumerated or objects of prayer. In Sūfism, Shī'ism and traditional Sunnism, many Muslims ask "saints" to intercede with Allāh on their behalf.

³⁵ Authors' Note: The veil [*ḥijāb*] is not a male imposition as some tendentious interpretations would have it. It is the free choice of Muslim women who wear it to protect themselves from inappropriate gazes. In the Muslim world, the *ḥijāb* is viewed almost exclusively as a legal obligation from the standpoint of Islāmic jurisprudence [*fiqh*], and justified on social, and sometimes, political grounds. If there are men in the Islāmic world who wish to impose the veil on women, it is because they have lost the spiritual significance and elevated symbolism of

the scarf. It is through the *ḥijāb*, rich in mystical meaning, that Allāh manifests Himself, speaks to our souls, and makes His Presence known in Islāmic society.

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- Abū Ya'lā. See. Ibn al-Farrā'.
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